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ABSTRACT

Based on a survey conducted in 1992 by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), a study examined the types of writing students performed in school, the quality of their classroom writing, and the relationship between their classroom writing and their performance on the NAEP writing assessment. A nationally representative subgroup of more than 3,000 fourth and eighth graders who participated in the 1992 NAEP writing assessment submitted three pieces of writing that represented their best writing efforts and reflected different kinds of writing (narrative, informative, persuasive). Students were asked to give special preference to pieces developed using writing process strategies such as pre-writing activities, consulting with others about writing, and revising successive drafts. Teachers completed a brief questionnaire and students wrote a letter explaining their selections. Each student portfolio underwent a 3-part analysis. Major findings included: (1) most students submitted narrative and/or informative writing; (2) at fourth grade, most of the informative papers were brief and undeveloped; (3) most of the fourth-grade informative writing was at a basic level; (4) the majority of papers showed evidence that their writers had employed process strategies; (5) students who spent more time on writing performed better on their portfolio writing; and (6) generally, the correlation between assessment and portfolio ratings was low for narrative and informative writing for both grades. Contains 32 tables and 9 figures of data. A summary of state writing assessment programs, a 100-item annotated bibliography, a procedural appendix, administration materials, and examples of students' writing are attached.) (RS)

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Windows into the Classroom

NAEP's 1992 Writing Portfolio Study

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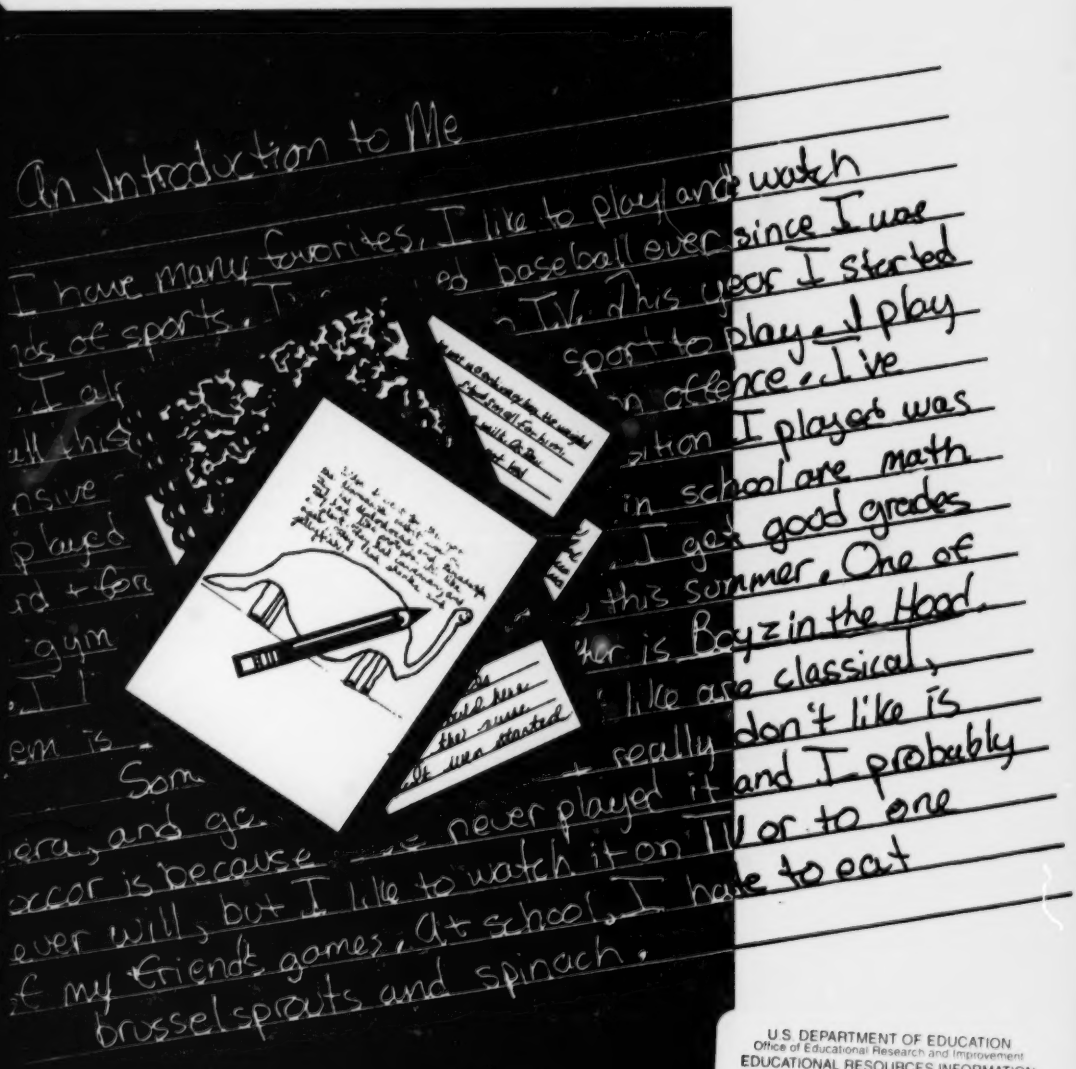
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Windows into the Classroom

NAEP's 1992 Writing Portfolio Study

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Executive Summary

This report describes the classroom writing of American schoolchildren based on a survey conducted in 1992 by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). It examines the types of writing students performed in school, the quality of their classroom writing, the relationship between their classroom writing and their performance on the NAEP writing assessment, as well as various instructional factors related to portfolio performance.

To conduct this study, NAEP asked a nationally representative subgroup of the fourth and eighth graders who participated in the 1992 NAEP writing assessment to work with their teachers and submit three pieces of writing from their Language Arts or English classes that represented their best writing efforts. Students were asked to give special preference to pieces developed using writing process strategies such as pre-writing activities, consulting with others about writing, and revising successive drafts. They were also asked to select pieces that represented different kinds of writing (i.e., narrative, informative, persuasive).

In addition, students were asked to write a letter to NAEP explaining their selections. Teachers were asked to complete a brief questionnaire describing the activities that lead to the students' writing; any use the

student made of process strategies; and the amount of time students spent on the activities.

A nationally representative subgroup of more than 3,000 fourth and eighth graders who participated in the main 1992 NAEP writing assessment[1] participated in the special portfolio study. This represented about a 90 percent participation rate.

Each student portfolio underwent a three-part analysis. First, a trained reader analyzed the various components in the portfolio in order to gather descriptive information about each portfolio piece. This analysis provided information about the type and length of writing, as well as evidence of the use of process strategies. The exact agreement for the descriptive ratings ranged from 83 to 97 percent.

When a portfolio contained pieces classified as narrative, informative, or persuasive, these same readers then applied specially designed six-level scoring guides to these pieces. This resulted in an evaluative score for each narrative, informative, and persuasive piece. The majority of the students each submitted at least three pieces of writing; more than 10,000 papers were evaluated in all. The adjacent agreement for the evaluative scoring ranged from 90 to 98 percent.[2] The exact agreement ranged from 51 to 67 percent.

A second group of specially trained readers conducted a third analysis. They synthesized information about the assignments and classroom activities that had generated the students' writing. This involved aggregating information from the teacher questionnaire, student letters, and portfolio submissions to provide information about the kinds of activities in which students engaged. The exact agreement for classifying these writing activities ranged from 85 to 95 percent.

Major Findings

What types of school-based writing are students doing?

As the figure below shows, at both fourth and eighth grades, the majority of the students submitted narrative and/or informative writing. Thirty-seven percent of the fourth-grade and 28 percent of the eighth-grade submissions were classified as narrative. At grade 4, 43 percent of the portfolio papers

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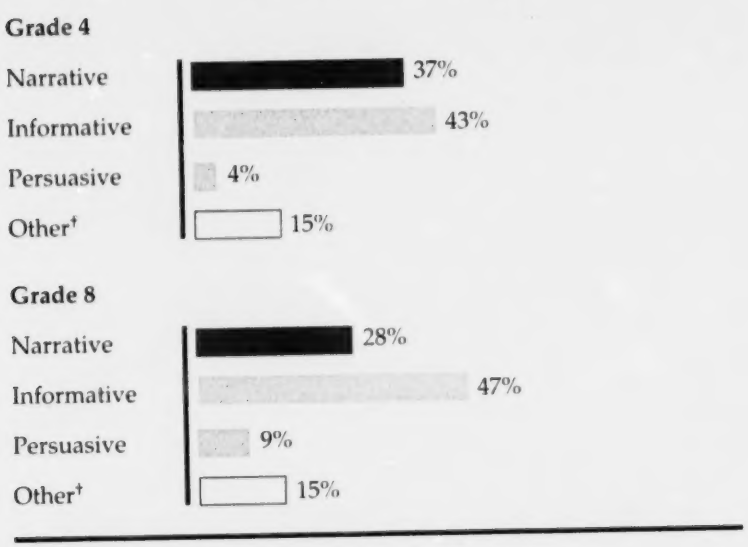
[1] Applebee, A.M., Langer, J.A., Mullis, I.V.S., Latham, A.S., Gentile, C.A., *1992 NAEP Writing Report Card*, (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994).

[2] Adjacent agreement represents the percentage of times when both readers gave the same paper either the same score or a score of only one point difference (i.e., reader one gave the paper a score of 3 and reader two gave the same paper a score of 4).

were informative and, at grade 8, 47 percent were informative. Only 4 percent of the fourth-grade and 9 percent of the eighth-grade papers were persuasive, while 15 percent of the portfolio submissions at both grades were either poems, brief letters (i.e., thank you notes or invitations), skill sheets, or illegible due to poor handwriting or photocopying.

GRADES 4 AND 8

Types of Portfolio Writing*



* Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

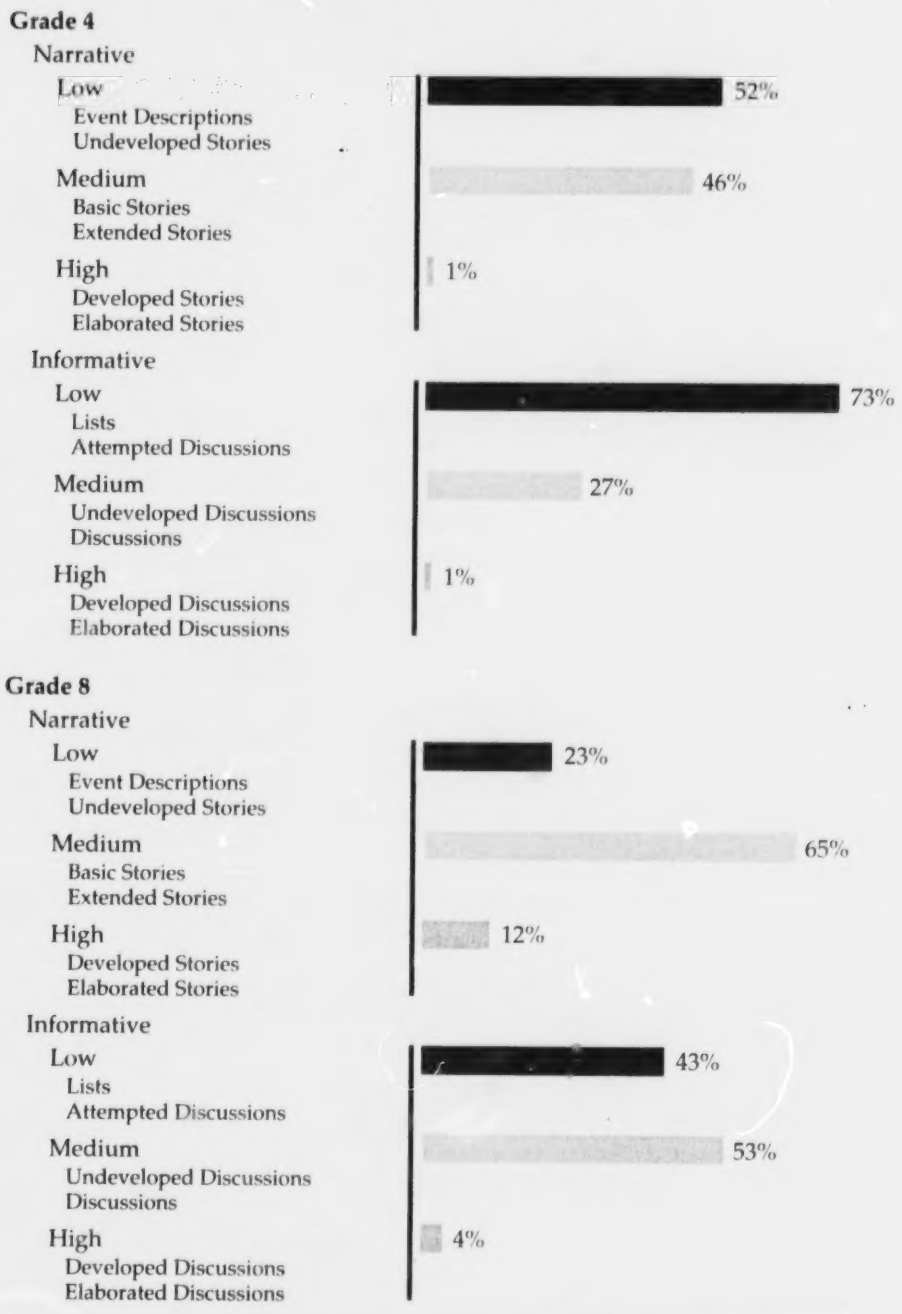
† Other = Poems, Letters (i.e., thank you notes and invitations), skill sheets and illegible papers.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

How good is students' school-based writing?

The figure below presents the results of the evaluative analysis of fourth and eighth graders' narrative and informative writing. Because the number of persuasive papers submitted by fourth and eighth graders was so low, their persuasive writing received only preliminary analysis. Fourth and eighth graders' narrative writing was evaluated along the same six-level scale that ranged from simple descriptions of events to basic stories to elaborated stories. The informative writing of students from both grades was evaluated along the same six-level informative scale that ranged from simple listings of information to attempted discussions to developed discussions.

Evaluation of Portfolio Writing*



*Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Narrative writing. At fourth grade, most of the narrative papers submitted (52 percent) were descriptions of events or lists of related events that were brief and undeveloped. Forty-six percent were stories with some descriptive detail but little development, and only 1 percent were developed stories.

By the eighth grade, only 23 percent of the narratives submitted were undeveloped stories. Sixty-five percent of the narratives included descriptive detail in at least one part of the story. However, only 12 percent were more developed or elaborated stories.

For narrative writing, at both grade levels, females performed better than males. At grade 4, White students outperformed their Black and Hispanic counterparts; while at grade 8, White students outperformed Black eighth graders.

Informative writing. Most of the fourth-grade informative writing (73 percent) was at a basic level — either listings of information or attempts at discussion. These papers were presentations of topics rather than discussions of themes. Twenty-seven percent of the informative papers submitted in portfolios received medium ratings. These papers could be considered a discussion of a theme. They included a broad range of information and the writer made some attempt to relate the information in at least one section of the paper. Only 1 percent of the fourth-grade papers were developed or elaborated discussions.

By the eighth grade, less than half of the informative papers (43 percent) were lists of information or attempted discussions. The majority of informative portfolio papers (53 percent) presented a broad range of information and related this information in a coherent way in at least one section of the paper. However, only 4 percent of the eighth grade informative papers were developed and organized discussions of a theme for specific purposes and audiences.

For informative writing, eighth-grade females performed better than male eighth graders and White fourth and eighth graders outperformed their Hispanic counterparts.

What process strategies were associated with students' best portfolio writing?

Most of the portfolio submissions were either narrative or informative pieces, written to an unspecified audience, in response to multi-stage integrated classroom activities. The majority of the papers showed evidence that their writers had employed process strategies, especially revision and

prewriting. About half of the students spent more than 50 minutes on their papers, but few students chose the topics of their writings and few papers were written on computer.

Almost every teacher of the eighth graders participating in this study reported that they used process approaches to writing instruction as either a supplement to their program or as central to their instruction. Also, about four-fifths of the students at both grades reported that their writing was kept in portfolios.

What instructional factors were associated with students' best portfolio writing?

Several aspects of students' portfolio writing and their general classroom experiences were related to their best portfolio performance.

At both grade levels, students who spent more time on their portfolio writing activities and who produced longer pieces of writing had higher portfolio scores. Also, the use of process strategies was related to the production of higher-level writing.

In general, students who spent more time on writing, in school and out of school, performed better on their portfolio writing. Also, students who were asked to write papers of medium and long lengths, at least once or twice a month, performed better than those who rarely or never did so.

How do classroom writing and timed assessment writing compare?

At the fourth grade, the majority of the students received similar ratings for their NAEP narrative assessment and portfolio papers, but not for their informative papers. For the eighth grade, the majority of the students received different ratings on their portfolio and assessment papers. In general, the correlation between assessment and portfolio ratings was low for narrative and informative writing for both grades (viz. .09 to .20).

A Note on Interpretations

Because of their basis in research, the NAEP survey results often help to confirm our understanding of how school and home factors relate to achievement. Although the effects of schooling and instruction are of prime concern, these analyses do not reveal the underlying causes of the relationships between background factors and performance. The NAEP assessment results are most useful when they are considered in light of other knowledge about the education system, such as trends in instructional

reform, changes in the school-age population, and societal demands and expectations. Throughout this report, references are provided to assist the reader in finding additional related information about the topics covered.

Because this special study, conducted as part of the main 1992 NAEP writing assessment, was intended to focus on students' classroom-based writing, an effort was made to report on factors that most related to students' classroom writing. For more elaborate discussions of a range of home and school characteristics as they relate to writing performance, see the *NAEP 1992 Writing Report Card*.[3]

[3] Applebee, A.N., Langer, J.A., Mullis, I.V.S., Latham, A.S., and Gentile, C.A., *NAEP 1992 Writing Report Card* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994).

Part I

Assessing Students' Classroom-Based Writing

Part I of this report presents the procedures used to assess the classroom-based writing students submitted in their NAEP portfolios. Chapter One summarizes the procedures used to describe and classify the writing students submitted. Chapter Two presents the guides used to evaluate this writing and the results of this evaluation. In Part II, a variety of instructional characteristics and features of students' best portfolio writing are discussed. Also, students' level of performance on the NAEP writing assessment and the level of their best portfolio pieces are compared.

The body of the report is supplemented with several appendices. The first two appendices contain a summary of state writing assessment programs and an annotated bibliography on portfolio assessments. Next is a procedural appendix. The last two appendices contain copies of the administration materials and additional examples of students' classroom-based writing.

General Background on Writing Portfolios

Over the past several years, teachers and educators have been exploring and developing ways to use portfolios of students' writing to facilitate instruction and assessment. Practitioners in other fields, such as art and architecture, have long used folios and portfolios as a way of collecting, reviewing, selecting, and presenting their work. Writing teachers and other educators have embraced this concept and adapted it in various ways for use with process-oriented writing curricula.

The use of writing portfolios seems a natural outgrowth of the process approach to writing instruction — an obvious next stage in the development of a community of writers within a classroom or school. The use of portfolios to help students collect, review, select, and present their work accomplishes several goals of the process writing curriculum.

First, portfolios provide a means for collecting the various materials and drafts students may have produced when they composed their pieces of writing. Keeping students' work in portfolios facilitates the reviewing and revising activities so essential to writing process curricula. It also provides a way to collect evidence of growth over time in students' writing and encourages students to be responsible for their work.

Second, students' use of portfolios to organize and select their work gives them experience at evaluating their own writing and opportunities to develop the critical thinking skills necessary to become effective writers. Lastly, the use of portfolios within a process curriculum provides a genuine context for students' writing. It helps students become more aware that each piece of writing has a specific audience and purpose, and that their work reflects their continuing growth as a writer.

Portfolios and Assessment. Because portfolios provide an excellent record of the breadth and depth of students' writing, an increasing number of teachers have been using portfolios to evaluate students' writing abilities and their growth over time. Individual teachers and schools have developed ways of structuring the creation and evaluation of portfolios that suit their goals and curricula. To match the richness of the information portfolios give about students' abilities and growth, teachers have had to develop more complex and dynamic ways of evaluating portfolios than they had used with more traditional assessment methods.

At the same time, educators have been questioning traditional methods of evaluation and the degree to which these methods match the newer

curricula, such as process writing programs.[4] Assessment specialists began to expand the traditional definitions of test validity to include the concept of ecological or external validity evidence — the kinds of evidence acceptable in considering the validity of a test must be related to schools' instructional goals and students' experiences in the classroom.

Thus, as individual teachers and schools began using portfolios within their process writing curricula, educators at the district and state levels began to consider using portfolios for assessment purposes. In the past several years, many schools, districts, and states have developed portfolio assessment programs. Regional organizations, such as the Northwest Evaluation Association in Oregon, and national organizations, such as the National Writing Project, have been conducting conferences, publishing papers, and collecting research about the use of portfolio assessment programs at all levels. NAEP's recent survey of state writing assessment programs indicates that almost fifty percent of the states are considering implementing portfolio assessments (see Appendix A for information about state writing assessment programs).

Various Approaches to Writing Portfolios. As individuals, schools, districts, and states have been developing writing portfolio programs to use for instructional and assessment purposes, different kinds of portfolios have been developed to meet their various goals and needs. Some portfolios span a semester, others a school year, while others extend across several years. In some schools, students begin their portfolios in elementary school and continue adding to them until high school graduation. In some programs, students develop portfolios of their work in all subjects; in other programs, the focus is on their work in reading, writing, and language arts.

Portfolios developed specifically for assessment purposes sometimes include only work from students' regular classroom activities. At other times, they incorporate students' responses to common topics, prompts, or activities. In some cases, students and teachers select work for inclusion in the portfolio; in other cases, the students decide what pieces to include. Depending on who will ultimately evaluate the portfolio, students may be asked to comment on their work and/or teachers may be asked to describe the classroom contexts in which the writing activities occurred.

Through all these variations, the beginnings of a common definition of writing portfolios are emerging. The following description of a portfolio was presented to the participants in the portfolio project of the 1988 California Assessment Program:

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[4] See Appendix B for references to articles on process writing programs.

> Student portfolios contain samples of student performance collected over the school term to demonstrate the product and process of learning. . . Samples of student work should be self-selected as well as teacher-selected to show evidence of students' learning strategies, strengths, and current difficulties. This type of assessment encourages students to assume responsibility for their learning. . . In addition, when students select samples of their own work for inclusion in a portfolio they demonstrate higher level thinking skills of analysis and evaluation.[5]

In 1990, a working definition emerged from a conference sponsored by the Northwest Evaluation Association:

> A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress and achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student self-reflection.[6]

In 1991, the following addendum appeared in the professional literature on this subject: "The portfolio communicates what is learned and why it is important."[7]

For more detailed discussions of writing portfolios, see Appendix B, which contains an annotated bibliography of publications about portfolio projects across the United States, England, and Australia.

Collecting Students' NAEP Portfolios

The 1992 NAEP Portfolio Study. In 1992, as part of its ongoing efforts to assess the writing ability of American students, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) conducted a special writing portfolio study.

Based on its prior experience collecting, describing, and evaluating the school-based writing of students across the country (see the 1990 NAEP pilot portfolio study),[8] NAEP designed a more extensive study of students'

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[5] Fillmore Unified School District/CAP Portfolio Project — final draft of K-12 Language Arts Framework modeled on State's English/Language Arts Framework 1989.

[6] *What Makes a Portfolio a Portfolio?* cf. Also, *How Do Portfolios Measure Up?: A Cognitive Model for Assessing Portfolios* (ERIC). Paper presented at the 1990 Conference on Aggregating Portfolio Data and *White Paper on Aggregating Portfolio Data*, rev. ed. (1990). Meyer, C. and Chulman, S. (NEA).

[7] Paulson, F.L. and Paulson, P.R., "What makes a portfolio a portfolio?" in *Educational Leadership*, February, 1991

[8] Gentile, C., *Exploring New Methods for Collecting Students' School-based Writing: NAEP's 1990 Portfolio Study*, (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, April 1992).

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classroom-based writing in 1992. The main purposes of this study were: (1) to explore procedures for collecting multiple samples of classroom-based writing from students around the country; (2) to refine methods for analyzing and evaluating the diversity of writing submitted; and (3) to develop ways to present information about students' writing that are appropriate to a wide audience.

This 1992 NAEP portfolio study addresses three aspects of writing portfolios: student involvement in the selection of writing samples submitted, the inclusion of multiple samples of student work collected over time, and the examination of information about teacher assignments and student attitudes towards their own writing.

To this end, a nationally representative subgroup of the fourth and eighth graders who participated in NAEP's 1992 writing assessment was asked to work with their teachers and submit three pieces of writing from their Language Arts or English classes that represented their best writing efforts. They were asked to give special attention to pieces developed using writing process strategies such as pre-writing activities, consulting with others about writing, and revising successive drafts. They were also asked to submit pieces that represented different types of writing, such as narrative, informative, and persuasive writing.

Students were also asked to write a letter to NAEP explaining their selections. Teachers were asked to complete a brief questionnaire describing the activities that led to the students' writing; any use the student made of process strategies; and the amount of time spent on the activities.

While the NAEP portfolio provides a window into writing classrooms across the country, it does not analyze the performance of students on an individual basis nor does it collect samples of their work across the school year. Therefore, while it can address some of the issues central to classroom portfolios, it cannot address others such as growth over time.

The Participants. Approximately 3,600 students — 1,800 at grade 4 and another 1,800 at grade 8 — were invited to participate in the special portfolio study. Approximately 1,600 (89 percent) of the fourth graders and 1,650 (91 percent) of the eighth graders who were asked to participate submitted portfolios. Based on traditional NAEP scientific sampling procedures,[9] this group can be considered a nationally representative sample of the nation's fourth and eighth graders. (Appendix C contains

[9] For details about the sampling procedures see *The NAEP 1992 Technical Report*, (Washington DC: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994).

demographic information about the participating students.) These students had also participated in the 1992 NAEP writing assessment.

The Main 1992 NAEP Writing Assessments. The 1992 writing assessment was a new NAEP assessment comprised of informative, narrative, and persuasive writing tasks. The goal of the NAEP writing assessment was to evaluate the writing abilities of American students. To accomplish this, NAEP asked nationally representative samples of fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade students attending public and private schools — approximately 30,000 in all — to respond to a variety of writing tasks. Nine different writing tasks were used at grade 4, and 11 different tasks were used at grade 8. A planning page was included after each prompt to encourage students to reflect on the assigned topic and plan their responses.

According to a carefully determined sampling design, each student in the assessment had completed either two 25-minute writing tasks or one requiring 50 minutes (at grade 8), along with a series of background questions. Teachers of the eighth-grade students were also asked a set of questions about their own backgrounds and educational experiences. At each grade approximately 1,500 students responded to each task.

Trained readers evaluated the papers according to scoring guidelines tailored for each task and encompassing six categories: *Response to Topic*,[10] *Undeveloped Response, Minimally Developed, Developed, Elaborated, and Extensively Elaborated*. The exact agreement for these ratings, averaged across the tasks at all three grades, was 81 percent. This scoring guide presents the basic criteria used to evaluate students' responses to the main NAEP assessment, although these criteria were tailored to suit the specific features and requirements of each writing task. The results of the main 1992 NAEP writing assessment are presented in the *NAEP 1992 Writing Report Card*.[11]

The Portfolio Study Procedures. In the fall of 1991, the teachers of schools participating in the main NAEP writing assessment were contacted and informed that some of their students would be participating in the portfolio study. A brief description of this study was given to them at this time.

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[10] Papers classified as *Response to Topic* addressed the assigned topic, but not the task. For example, when asked to write a story about a magical balloon, some fourth graders wrote about how much they liked balloons but did not write a story. These papers were rated as *Response to Topic*.

[11] Applebee, A.N., Langer, J.A., Mullis, I.V.S., Latham, A.S., and Gentile, C.A., *NAEP 1992 Writing Report Card* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994).

Teachers were also given a copy of the report on NAEP's 1990 pilot portfolio study so that they could see how their students' classroom-based writing would be analyzed and evaluated.

In the spring of 1992, during the week of the writing assessment, teachers were provided with portfolio folders for the selected students to use in assembling their work. Directions to the students and teachers were printed on the cover of the folders, as were guidelines for selecting papers. Students were asked to select three of their best pieces of writing, to include any evidence of process strategies used in the production of these pieces, and to write a brief letter to NAEP explaining why they selected these pieces. Teachers were then asked to review the students' selections and answer a brief questionnaire about the instructional activities that generated the students' writing. Appendix D contains a copy of the first letter to the teachers, the front cover of the NAEP portfolio folder, and the teacher questionnaire.

NAEP field administrators provided assistance to teachers and students when needed, making photocopies of students' work for inclusion in the portfolios and helping to answer questions about the project. A week after delivering the portfolio folders, the field administrators returned to the classroom to collect the folders.

The number of papers submitted by the students in this study is shown in the table below. The majority of the students in both grades included at least three pieces of writing in their NAEP portfolios. Thirty-six percent of the fourth graders and 35 percent of the eighth graders submitted one or two pieces. Six percent of the fourth graders and 13 percent of the eighth graders did not include any writing in their folders.

Number of Papers Collected in NAEP Portfolios

Number of Papers	PERCENT OF STUDENTS	
	Grade 4	Grade 8
0	6	13
1	10	12
2	26	23
3	54	49
4 or more	5	3
Total Number of Papers	5,242	5,781

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Analyzing the Portfolio Papers. After collection, each student portfolio underwent a three-part analysis. First, the writing submitted in the portfolio folders was classified and various features of each piece were described. This analysis provided information about the type and length of writing submitted and any information available about the kinds of process strategies used in its production.

The second analysis involved classifying the types of classroom activities or assignments that had generated the writing. Trained readers synthesized information from the teacher questionnaire, student letter, and from the writing itself in order to determine what type of activity had been used.

In the third analysis, portfolio pieces classified as narrative, informative, or persuasive were evaluated. Specially designed six-level scoring guides were used to evaluate each portfolio piece. While similar to the guides used in the main 1992 NAEP writing assessment, these portfolio guides were designed to be applied to a wide range of narrative, informative, and persuasive writing.

After students' portfolio submissions had been analyzed for descriptive features and their narrative, informative, and persuasive papers had been evaluated, several methods for describing students' overall portfolio performance were explored. First, coding the level of their entire portfolio was considered. This approach was not feasible because the portfolios came from such a wide variety of classrooms. Next, calculating a mean or median of each students' narrative and informative papers was considered. This proved problematic, because each paper had a unique set of descriptive features and averaging these features was not appropriate. Instead, the best narrative and informative submission from each student were selected for further analysis.

In Part I of this report, the procedures used to analyze the portfolios and the preliminary results of this analysis for all of the papers submitted are presented. Part II focuses on students' best narrative and informative portfolio submissions. The first chapter in Part I presents the results of the descriptive analysis and the classification of classroom activities. In Chapter Two, the results of the evaluative analysis are presented, along with examples of students' writing.

1

Describing Students' Portfolio Writing

Introduction

The first step in analyzing multiple samples of students' classroom-based writing was to describe and classify the wide diversity of writing submitted by the participants. Considering that no more than eight students from any single class were selected to participate in this study,[12] most of the papers submitted were responses to unique classroom activities. The corpus of writing submitted was so diverse that every paper could have been evaluated with a unique set of criteria, which would have made comparing students' classroom-based writing impossible. The challenge, then, was to develop descriptive criteria that would yield useful information about the types of writing students submitted. Once this was accomplished, the next step, moving beyond describing papers to evaluating performance, could be addressed.

[12] For a discussion of sampling procedures see *The NAEP 1992 Technical Report*, (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994).

To accomplish the task of describing the writing submitted, a panel of writing experts was assembled. Each member had experience developing writing portfolio programs at the school, district, or state level. After reading a large sample of the students' papers, the panel developed a series of descriptive categories to capture the key features of the students' papers. These categories focused on: (1) the types of writing submitted; (2) evidence of resources used; and (3) evidence of process and revision strategies used. Also noted were (4) evidence of computer use; (5) length of text; and (6) time spent producing the text. A group of trained readers then read each of the papers submitted in students' portfolios and applied these descriptive categories to the papers.

Types of Writing

Students' portfolio submissions were each classified into one of six categories: narrative, informative, persuasive, poems, letters (i.e., invitations and thank you notes), and skill sheets. At an early stage in classifying students' papers, a distinction was made between personal experience narratives and fictional narratives, and between informative reports and analytical reports.[13] The panelists believed that these differentiations would accommodate and acknowledge the variety within both the narrative and expository domains. However, during the process of developing the scoring guides, the scoring guide developers found that the same criteria could be applied to various types of narratives and to various types of reports. Thus, the same scoring guide could be used for both types of narratives and the same scoring guide for both types of exposition. NAEP classified the papers in these domains, therefore, as either narrative or informative.

Any piece of writing that fit a common poetic pattern was classified as a poem. Thank you notes and invitations, because they were written for very specific purposes and were so brief, were classified as letters. However, letters which contained an opinion or argument were considered persuasive; letters that related a story or sequence of event were considered narrative; and letters that discussed a topic were classified as informative.

A small percentage of teachers in both grades (1 to 4 percent) commented that they did not begin teaching writing until later in the school year. As a result, they did not have samples of extended pieces of student

[13] These categories were based on those used by the California Assessment Program, 1989.

writing to submit. Instead, these teachers sent in copies of work sheets, short answer quizzes, or spelling lists, all of which were classified as skill sheets.

As shown in Table 1.1, at both grades 4 and 8, a high percentage of writing submitted was classified as informative (43 and 47 percent, respectively). The next largest category for both grade levels was narrative writing — 37 percent of the fourth-grade and 28 percent of the eighth-grade portfolio submissions were classified as narrative. Only 4 percent of the fourth-grade and 9 percent of the eighth-grade submissions were persuasive. Few papers were classified as poems, letters, or skill sheets.

Table 1.1

Types of Writing*

	Grade 4 Percentage	Grade 8 Percentage
Narrative	37 (1.2)	28 (1.2)
Informative	43 (1.1)	47 (1.5)
Persuasive	4 (0.4)	9 (0.7)
Poems	6 (0.5)	6 (0.5)
Letters	4 (0.3)	2 (0.3)
Skill Sheets	4 (0.5)	1 (0.2)
Total Number of Papers	N = 5,242	N = 5,781

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Two percent of the papers at grade 4 and 7 percent at grade 8 were unratable due to illegibility or poor photocopy quality.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

The ability of the readers to classify types of writing reliably was assessed. The percent of exact agreement between readers was calculated for 30 percent of the papers. These papers received a blind second scoring — the second reader could not see the score given to the paper by the first reader. (The remaining papers were scored by one reader.) Exact percentage agreement above 80 is considered strong. At grade 4, the percent exact agreement was 84. At grade 8, the percent exact agreement was 83.

Evidence of the Use of Writing Process Strategies

When analyzing the students' papers, the readers also looked for evidence of the use of writing processes, such as prewriting activities, peer or teacher collaboration, or revisions of drafts. To locate this evidence, the readers considered students' submissions as well as information from the teacher questionnaires and student letters.

Table 1.2 presents the results of this analysis. At both grade levels, revision was the most common strategy utilized, followed by prewriting (brainstorming, reading, discussing with family or friends), peer conferencing, and teacher editing. Strategies used less often were teacher conferencing, use of resources (library, resource books, etc.), peer editing, and publication/sharing. Overall, 61 percent of the fourth graders' and 66 percent of the eighth graders' portfolio writing demonstrated use of at least one type of process strategy.

Table 1.2

Evidence of the Use of Writing Process Strategies*

	Grade 4 Percentage	Grade 8 Percentage
Prewriting	26 (1.2)	29 (1.3)
Peer Conferencing	17 (1.1)	16 (0.9)
Teacher Conferencing	4 (0.7)	4 (0.6)
Use of Resources	5 (0.4)	4 (0.6)
Revising	40 (1.3)	44 (2.0)
Peer Editing	9 (0.7)	11 (0.9)
Teacher Editing	15 (1.0)	21 (1.4)
Publication/Sharing	11 (0.9)	6 (0.8)
No evidence provided	39 (1.5)	34 (1.8)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

*Note: Papers can have multiple types of writing process strategies. Hence, the percents in a column are greater that 100 percent.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

The participating teachers and students were requested to include in the portfolio any drafts available for each piece. At the fourth grade, 15 percent of the writing selections included draft versions along with final versions of the work. At the eighth grade, 17 percent of the selections had draft versions.

The ability of the readers to classify evidence of writing process reliably was assessed. The same blind scoring method used in the two previous analyses was used for this analysis. At the grade 4, the percent exact agreement was 95. At the grade 8, the percent exact agreement was 96.

Length of Papers

One benefit of using students' classroom-based writing for assessment is that, under regular classroom situations, students have time to write longer texts than they do under timed assessment conditions. The length of classroom-based papers submitted by the fourth graders in this study ranged from six words to 2,600 words, with a median length of 95 words. Two percent of the fourth-grade papers exceeded 500 words. The length of classroom-based papers submitted by the eighth graders ranged from seven words to 3,796 words, with a median length of 166 words. Ten percent of the eighth-grade papers exceeded 500 words.

Time Spent on Writing Activity

Another benefit of using students' classroom-based writing for assessment is that students have more time to produce a piece of writing than they would under timed assessment conditions. Professional writers frequently revise their work, reformulate goals, and collaborate with peers when completing a piece. Having time to rewrite, to revise, and to collaborate is an important element of writing process instruction.[14]

Table 1.3 presents information about the time students spent producing their portfolio submissions, according to their teachers. Forty-six percent of the fourth-grade and 57 percent of the eighth-grade portfolio submissions involved more than 50 minutes spent on the writing. This suggests that these selections were written over a period of at least two writing sessions. In contrast, only 16 percent of the fourth-grade and 10 percent of the eighth-grade submissions were written in less than 25 minutes.

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[14] Moffett, J. and Wagner, B.J., *Student-Centered Language Arts, K-12*, fourth edition (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, 1992).

Table 1.3
Time Spent on Writing Activity

	Grade 4 Percentage	Grade 8 Percentage
0-25 minutes	16 (0.8)	10 (0.9)
26-50 minutes	24 (1.5)	17 (1.1)
More than 50 minutes	46 (1.8)	57 (2.5)
No information given	15 (1.0)	17 (1.5)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Use of Computers

Although many schools across the country have computers available to students, only a small percentage of the papers submitted for this study were typed: 6 percent at the fourth grade and 14 percent at the eighth grade. Students were not asked whether they had used a computer in working on their portfolio submissions. Instead, the use of computers was inferred from the product in the folder — if the paper was typed, then it was classified as having been the result of computer use.

Choice of Topic and Types of Writing Activities

For the past decade, theories in literacy education have emphasized the benefit of creating rich, realistic learning contexts in which students are active participants in the development of their reading and writing abilities.[15] Process approaches to writing instruction also emphasize the

[15] Jaggar, A. and Smith-Burke, M.T., *Observing the Language Learner* (Newark DE: International Reading Association and Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1985).

active, meaning-creating aspects of writing.[16] Under these approaches, teachers alternate between activities that require students to select their own topics, purposes, and audiences for writing and activities in which teachers (or other students) specify topics, purposes, and audiences.[17] The goal is to give students a wide range of experiences with writing. In school and beyond school, students will be asked to write for their own as well as for other people's purposes. Therefore, a central goal of writing programs is to enable students to be effective writers under both self-directed and authority-directed conditions.

Eighty percent of the teachers who participated in this study completed the teacher questionnaire about the activities that generated their students' writing. Based on information gathered from teachers' responses to the questionnaire and students' letters, very few students at either fourth or eighth grade selected the topic of their portfolio papers (8 percent and 9 percent, respectively).

We further analyzed the information teachers gave about their classroom writing activities, classifying them based on how specific the activities were and what sources of knowledge students were required to draw upon to complete the activities. This analysis yielded four main types of activities: general writing prompts, focused writing prompts, content reports, and integrated activities. "Prompts" were any topic, situation, stimulus, or assignment given to students to elicit a piece of writing. In keeping with recent theories about the importance of context in literacy learning, writing instruction and assessment experts maintain that an effective writing prompt (or instructional activity) should not only specify a topic for the writer, but a clear audience and purpose as well.[18]

This analysis was designed to look for evidence that teachers' approaches to writing instruction were consistent with process writing approaches. Thus, NAEP specifically asked teachers to indicate whether any process strategies had been used such as free writing, peer discussion, drafting, or revising. Table 1.4 summarizes the percentage of activities in each category. Some teachers did not respond to the questions about instructional activities. In total, 14 percent of the activities at grade 4 and 13 percent at grade 8 were not described, and thus are listed as unknown.

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[16] Langer, J.A. and Applebee, A.N., *How Writing Shapes Thinking: A Study of Teaching and Learning* (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1987).

[17] Graves, D.H., *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work* (Exeter, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983).

[18] White, E.M., *Teaching and Assessing Writing* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1986).

Table 1.4

Types of Writing Activities

	NARRATIVE		INFORMATIVE		PERSUASIVE		TOTAL	
	Gr 4	Gr 8	Gr 4	Gr 8	Gr 4	Gr 8	Gr 4	Gr 8
General Prompts	26 (1.9)	18 (1.8)	27 (1.5)	19 (1.1)	19 (4.7)	14 (1.7)	26 (1.3)	19 (1.1)
Focused Prompts	5 (0.5)	7 (1.0)	7 (0.8)	7 (0.8)	9 (2.8)	10 (1.2)	6 (0.5)	7 (0.6)
Content Reports	1 (0.2)	1 (0.4)	4 (0.5)	4 (0.6)	2 (1.3)	2 (0.6)	2 (0.3)	3 (0.4)
Integrated Activities	56 (2.1)	62 (2.4)	49 (1.9)	57 (2.2)	60 (3.3)	63 (3.3)	52 (1.6)	59 (1.9)
Unknown	12 (1.1)	12 (1.6)	15 (1.2)	12 (1.5)	11 (1.7)	11 (2.1)	14 (0.9)	13 (1.3)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

As with the other types of analyses, the percent of exact agreement between readers was calculated for 30 percent of the papers. At the grade 4, the rate of exact agreement was 92 percent; at the grade 8, it was 88 percent.

General Writing Prompts. Overall, 26 percent of the fourth-grade and 19 percent of the eighth-grade activities could be classified as General Writing Prompts. In these types of activities, the teachers gave the students a general topic about which to write, but they did not focus the students' attention on any single aspect of the topic. Nor did the prompts make explicit to students an audience or purpose for their writing. Below are two examples of this type of activity.

Write a scary story about this room. (fourth grade)

Describe yourself and your future. (eighth grade)

Focused Writing Prompts. Overall, 6 percent of the fourth-grade and 7 percent of the eighth-grade activities described by the teachers could be classified as Focused Writing Prompts. With these activities, teachers specified for students not only the topic and the task but an overall purpose. Sometimes activities in this category also specified an audience and criteria for effective writing. Below are two examples of this type of activity.

Since we live near the seashore, we have an appreciation of its beauty. Let's share a description of the seashore with a child in the Midwest who has never seen the ocean. (fourth grade)

Select one of the seven topics on the board and write a letter to the local newspaper expressing your opinion. (eighth grade)

Content Reports. Although we had asked for papers written for English or Language Arts classes, some students submitted papers on science or social studies topics, indicating the use of writing across the curriculum. Only 2 percent of the fourth-grade and 3 percent of the eighth-grade activities fit into this category. These activities required that students write papers reporting on information they learned from classwork as well as from outside sources, such as newspapers or reference books. Papers about historical figures or concepts in science are examples of this type of activity. Below are two examples.

Research and write a report about the tropical rain forest. Use information from magazines, newspapers, and books. (fourth grade)

Conduct library research about a famous Black American. Determine why this individual deserves a place in history. (eighth grade)

Integrated Activities. The majority of the activities at both grade levels appeared to be part of multi-day, multi-stage, integrated activities, where teachers engaged students in a series of classroom activities around a central theme or text. Overall, 52 percent of the fourth-grade and 59 percent of the eighth-grade activities were classified as integrated. Below are two examples of this type of activity.

Write a story about a dinosaur you created, giving a description and important facts about it (assignment given at the end of a unit on dinosaurs). [Class discussion of ideas and descriptions; first version drafted and proofread; draft revised and final version produced.] (fourth grade)

Write your life story/autobiography. [Elements of an autobiography were discussed in class. Students grouped in pairs and conducted interviews with each other. Students asked questions pertaining to their life history and events. Students exchanged notes and planned their autobiographies, with suggestions from their partners. They reviewed each other's first drafts and proofread their second drafts before a final version was produced.] (eighth grade)

Summary

Although participants in this study came from different classrooms across the country and wrote on a wide variety of topics, the papers they submitted had some commonalities. Most of the papers we received were either informative or narrative pieces, written to an unspecified audience, in response to multi-stage, integrated classroom activities. The majority of the papers showed evidence that their writers had employed process strategies in producing them. Revision and prewriting were the most frequently used process strategies. In addition, the teachers reported that about half of the students spent more than 50 minutes on their papers. Lastly, few students chose the topic of their writings; the papers at both grades 4 and 8 varied greatly in length; and few papers were written on computer.

2

Evaluating Students' Portfolio Writing

Introduction

This chapter presents the scoring guides used to evaluate students' portfolio writing and presents the results of this evaluation. For each domain evaluated (narrative, informative, persuasive), the percentage of papers submitted at each level of the scoring guide is reported. Examples of students' papers at each level of the scoring guides are also presented.

Narrative Writing

This section presents the scoring guide used to evaluate students' narrative papers; the results of this evaluation for all of the fourth- and eighth-grade narrative papers submitted; and examples of students' papers at each level of the scoring guide.

The Narrative Scoring Guide. In reading and evaluating the narrative papers, the scoring guide development team focused on several key features of narrative writing. First, they loosely defined a story as a series of related events or happenings. Hence, the first level of the narrative scoring guide is not termed a "story," but an *Event Description* because only one event is described.

The second feature the team saw as differentiating among the narrative papers was amount of development. The main difference between the second and third levels of the narrative guide is that, in a *Basic Story*, one aspect of the story is somewhat developed, whereas no aspects of an *Undeveloped Story* are presented in any detail. The difference between the third and fourth levels is that many of the events of an *Extended Story* are somewhat developed at the fourth level. At the fifth level, *Developed Story*, almost all of the events are described in detail.

The third feature of narrative writing the team used to evaluate the papers was quality of development. Papers classified at the upper two levels, *Developed Story* and *Elaborated Story*, not only contained detailed episodes, but also included some source of tension or conflict (characters' goals, problems to be solved, mysteries to be unravelled). These two levels differ in the author's success in establishing and resolving the tension or conflict. While in a *Developed Story* tension is clearly (and often creatively) established, it is not completely resolved; in an *Elaborated Story*, the tension is both clearly established and completely resolved.

Figure 2.1

Narrative Scoring Guide

Describing a single event:

1 **Event Description.** Paper is a list of sentences minimally related or a list of sentences that all describe a single event; or a description of a setting or character.

Writing about a series of events:

2 **Undeveloped Story.** Paper is a listing of related events. More than one event is described, but with few details about setting, characters, or the events. (Usually there is no more than one sentence telling about each event.)

3 **Basic Story.** Paper describes a series of events, giving details (in at least two or three sentences) about some aspect of the story (the events, the characters' goals, or problems to be solved). But the story may be undeveloped or lack cohesion because of problems with syntax, sequencing, events missing.

Writing about a sequence of episodes:

4 **Extended Story.** Paper describes a sequence of episodes, including details about most story elements (i.e., setting, episodes, characters' goals, problems to be solved). But the stories are confusing or incomplete (i.e., at the end of the story the characters' goals are ignored or problems inadequately resolved; the beginning does not match the rest of the story; the plot is weak; the internal logic or plausibility of characters' actions is not maintained).

5 **Developed Story.** Paper describes a sequence of episodes in which most of the story elements are clearly developed (i.e., setting, episodes, characters' goals, or problems to be solved) with a simple resolution of these goals or problems at the end. May have one or two problems, include too much detail, or the end may be inconsistent with the rest of the story. Or the story may contain one highly developed episode with subplots.

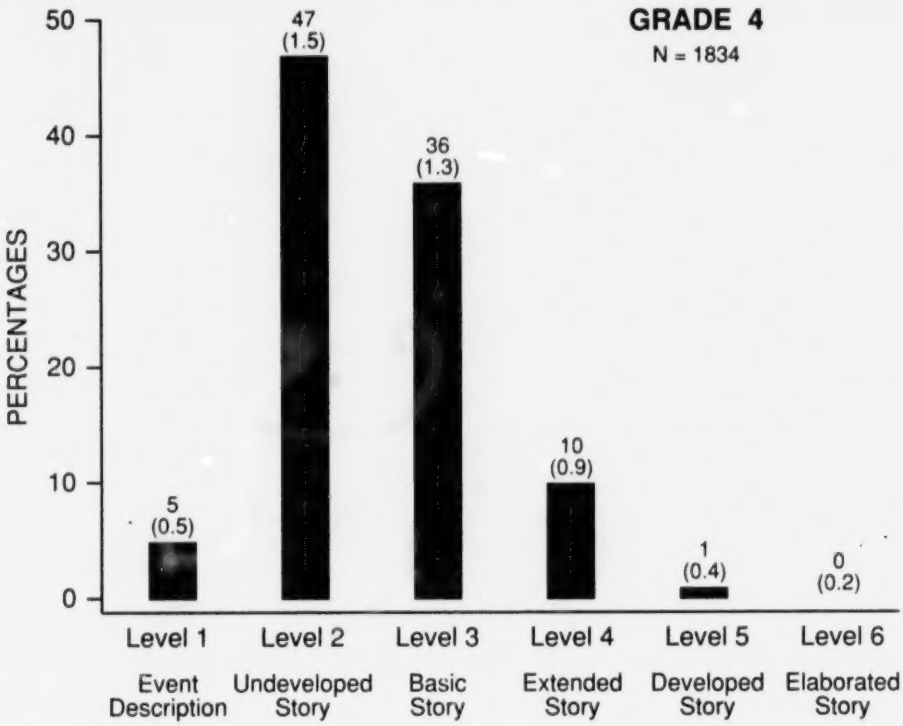
6 **Elaborated Story.** Paper describes a sequence of episodes in which almost all story elements are well developed (i.e., setting, episodes, characters' goals, or problems to be solved). The resolution of the goals or problems at the end are elaborated. The events are presented and elaborated in a cohesive way.

Results of the Evaluation. Figure 2.2 presents the percentage of narrative papers at grades 4 and 8 at each performance level of the narrative scoring guide. At the fourth grade, 5 percent of the papers were classified as *Event Descriptions*, 47 percent as *Undeveloped Stories*, 36 percent as *Basic Stories*, 10 percent as *Extended Stories*, and 1 percent as *Developed Stories*. No fourth-grade papers were classified as *Elaborated Stories*.

As might be expected, more of the eighth-grade papers received higher ratings than did the fourth-grade papers. Two percent of the eighth-grade papers were rated as *Event Descriptions*, 21 percent as *Undeveloped Stories*, 36 percent as *Basic Stories*, 29 percent as *Extended Stories*, 11 percent as *Developed Stories*, and 1 percent were classified as *Elaborated Stories*.

Figure 2.2a

Results for Narrative Papers

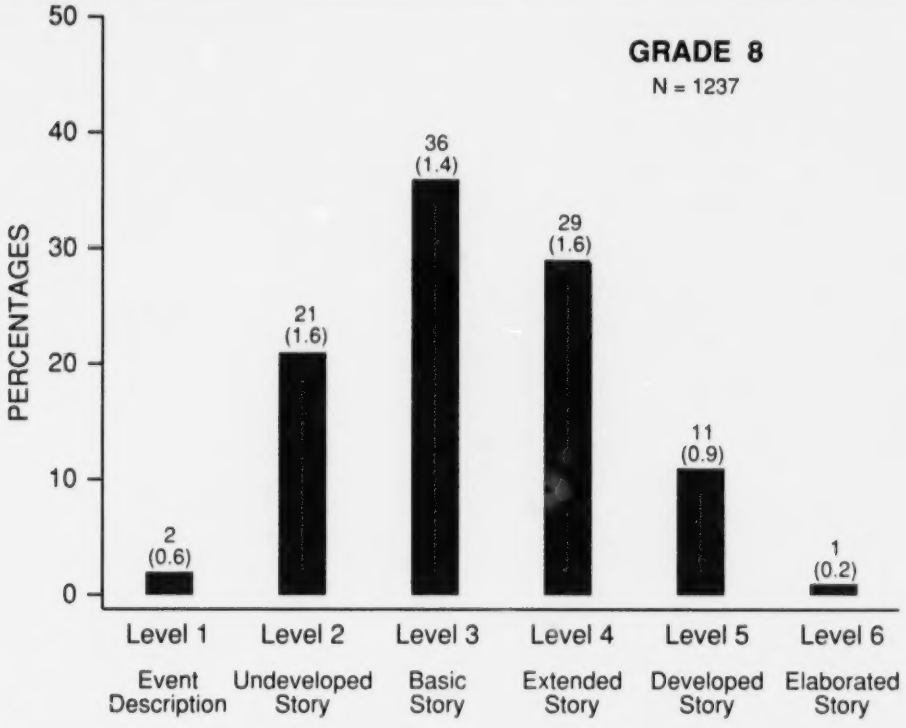


The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Figure 2.2b

Results for Narrative Papers

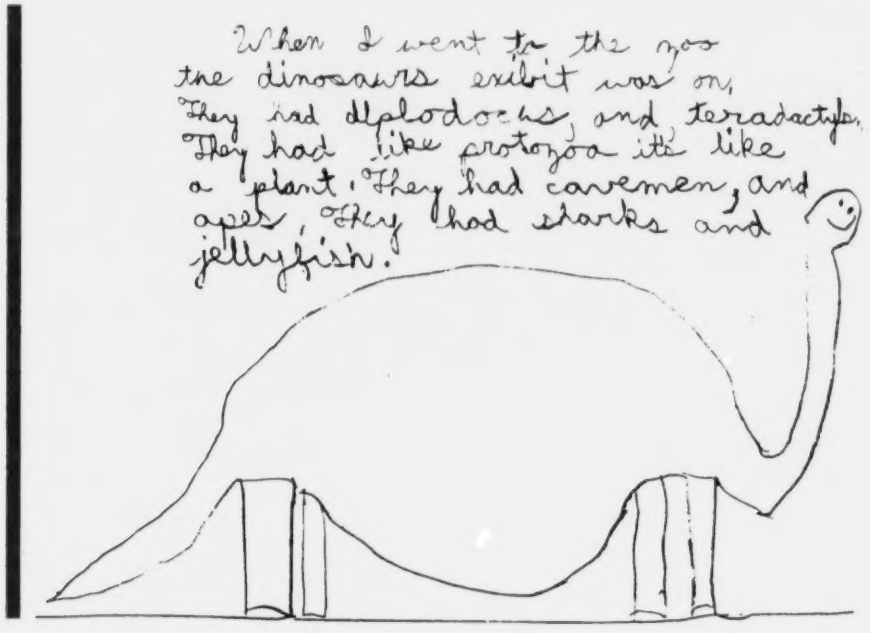


The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Examples of Narrative Papers[19]

Event Description (score of 1). Papers classified as *Event Descriptions* tell about one event. Basically, they say, "such and such happened." Some of the papers in this category give details about the setting and so appear to be more elaborate stories. However, they end with a description of a single event, rather than a series of events. The paper below written by a fourth grader, is an example of a simple *Event Description*.


When I went to the zoo
the dinosaurs exibit was on.
They had diplodocus and terradactyls.
They had like protozoa it's like
a plant. They had cavemen, and
apes. They had sharks and
jellyfish.

[19] For more examples of students' writing, see Appendix E.

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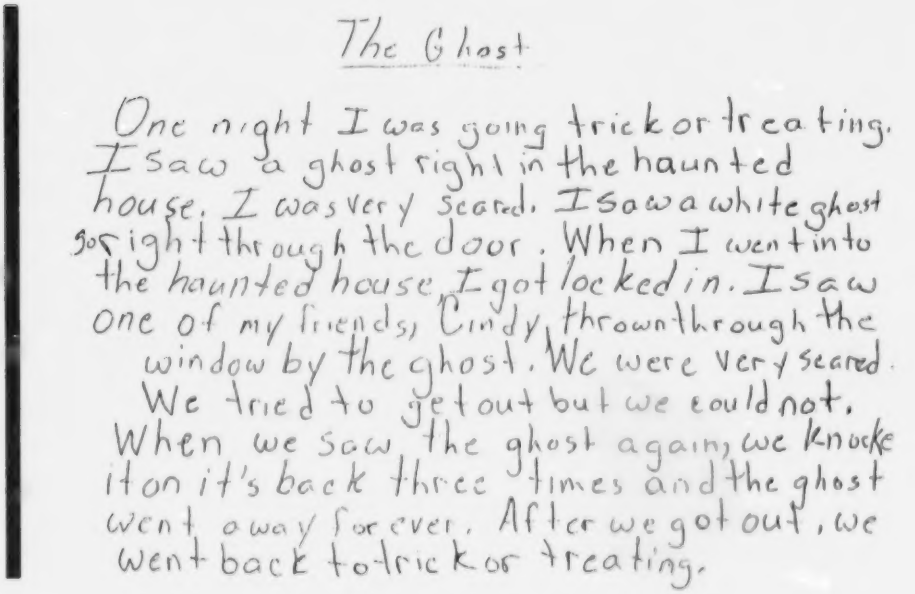
Undeveloped Story (score of 2). Papers classified as *Undeveloped Stories* tell about a series of events. Basically, they say, "one day this happened, then something else happened, and then another thing happened." However, the events, as well as the setting and characters, are only briefly described. The writers give very few details about each event; the story is a listing of related events.

These stories are similar to a front-page newspaper report, where the basic facts of a story are reported (who, what, when, where) but where few details about why events happened are presented. For example, in the paper below, the fourth-grade writer uses one sentence to describe each event.



The Ghost

One night I was going trick or treating. I saw a ghost right in the haunted house. I was very scared. I saw a white ghost go right through the door. When I went into the haunted house I got locked in. I saw one of my friends, Cindy, thrown through the window by the ghost. We were very scared. We tried to get out but we could not. When we saw the ghost again, we knocke it on it's back three times and the ghost went away forever. After we got out, we went back to trick or treating.

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Basic Story (score of 3). In papers classified as *Basic Stories*, the writers go one step beyond a simple listing of related events. One aspect of the story (the events, the characters' goals, or the setting) is somewhat developed. However, these stories lack a sense of cohesion and completeness. Events may be presented out of sequence, some aspect of the story may be confusing due to problems with syntax, or a key event may be unclear. For example, in the paper below, the fourth-grade writer describes a series of events in his/her life as a pencil. Although two simple problems arise and are resolved, the ending is confusing — it seems to be a listing of loosely related events.

My Life As a pencil

January 21, 1992

Once apon a time my owner Joe Hill was getting ready to go to school. He put me behind his ear and picked up his books off to school he went. When he got to class the scariest thing happend he had put me in the pencil sharpener and after he took me out I dreamed so loud everyone looked at Joe as if he was crazy or something he went to sit down at this seat. When Mrs. Allen called him to her desk so he

Cajed me on top of his desk.
and I rolled off the desk and on
the floor I went down-down-
crash! When I fell and my lead
broke and he had to resharpen
it again and then my head
fell off and he had to throw
me away. I felt lonely then
Joshua threw his grandmother's
pencil away. Then they
said that their teacher was
really mean then they ate lunch.

Extended Story (score of 4). *Extended Stories* go beyond *Basic Stories* in that many of the events in these stories are elaborated to some degree. This degree of development gives a sense of a sequence of distinct story episodes. Details are given about the setting, the characters' goals, problems to be solved, and the key events. Yet, these stories may be somewhat incomplete in that the characters' goals may be left unresolved or the problem posed in the story's opening never solved. The ending may not match the beginning or the story's ending may be inconsistent with the internal logic established throughout the rest of the story. Or, as in the example below (written by an eighth grader), the story's plot may be simple and the character development basic.

It is important to note that, while *Extended Stories* are not as elaborated or complex as are *Developed Stories* and *Elaborated Stories*, they are successful stories — all of the key story elements and events are clearly presented. They are the simplest type of complete story on this scale.

I was There

One afternoon on Sept. 30, 1991 I made a time machine. My time machine was powered by thread. I made it because my friend Alma and I had a paper due in history about Betsy Ross, and we hated to read.

So I called my friend Alma and told her to come and see my neat invention. When she arrived, I showed her my time machine. She started laughing, "A time machine!" she roared. Then, I told her "We could travel back in time and visit Betsy Ross." Then Alma said "Well, maybe, we could visit Ben Franklin on the way!"

I told her "Oh, Shut up and get in!" She got in and I set the buttons for June, 1774. It was the wildest ride I've ever been on, or should I say experienced. We landed in a field. Then, we hid the time machine behind some bushes.

We started walking to town and we saw a Sign that said "Welcome to Philadelphia." Then we started asking where we could find Betsy Ross. We met a little boy named Chris

He was running around like a little lizard. He told us that Betsy Ross was his next door nieghbor. Chris showed us where she lived. Then, we talked to Betsy Ross and asked her if it was okay if we could stay with her a few days. She told us that we could, but she wanted us to help around the house and with the kids. The next day we washed some dishes, and helped with the kids. We mostly helped with Johnny, the youngest boy. He was very artistic like his mom.

That day some patriots came to Betsy and asked her to make a flag for the U.S.A. She agreed. She made several flags and asked us which one we liked. Then we told her that there should be a flag which is red, white, and blue. She said, I guess we should have colors to represent the U.S.A., NOt Wierd ones like purple, crazy colors.

We asked her a few questions about the revolution. Alma and I started the time machine. Betsy had given us the flags that she didn't like. Then we used them for fuel in our time machine since we needed more thread. This was the coolest adventure I've ever been on!

Developed Story (score of 5). *Developed Stories* describe a sequence of episodes in which almost all of the events and story elements are somewhat elaborated. Yet, one aspect of these stories is not well developed such as the ending, a crucial event, or an important character. In the example below (written by an eighth grader), each episode is somewhat developed, but so much happens that the characters are undeveloped.

Once upon a time there was a couple named David and Daisy who were barely married. They went on their honeymoon to a forest called Silver Creek. They went to the forest for camping because they thought it was going to be fun.

They rented a cabin. They were curicus to know what was in the woods because they kept on hearing noises, moans and groans. When they went farther into the woods they found a cave. The noises come from inside the cave. They were louder and louder. They were getting scared, but the lady's husband said, "Dont worry, its nothing to be scared of".

They were still curious to go inside the cave. When they went inside the cave the rocks from the top fell on the entrance and they were trapped inside. They screamed because they got scared. At first they didn't know what to do, but they said, now that they were stuck inside they should see what thing was

making the harrible noise.

When they went farther they heard a gun shot. It reverberated throughout the cave. The gun sound finally stopped. After the gun shot, they heard a sound like someone was chasing them. No one was there. Suddenly they heard noises behind them. When they turned around, there was a big rat. The rat ran infront of them. They kept on walking and walking. They went farther and farther into the cave. They kept on hearing the noise but the further they went, the more the noise sounded like someone yelling for help.

When they got to the middle of the cave, they found three paths. They realized that the noise was getting louder from the path in the middle of the cave, so they went that way.

There was and old wooden door blocking the way from which the noise was coming. They opened it and alot of insects crawled out. They got scared and started to scream. They saw roaches, rats, bats and lizards

coming from the opening. The bats started to fly around them and the rats were big and dirty. They heard the crunching of roaches underneath their feet. When Daisy ran to get away from them she fell into a hole.

She hurt her arm, but not badly. when she looked around she saw a man down there. His leg was trapped she tried to help him but she couldn't because the chain on his leg was so heavy. She called David to help her, so he tried to go into the hole. The hole was thin, but he squezed through. When he got down there he noticed the trap was a ball and chain, like from a prison. He was curious to know why. He was hurt, so Dave took a big rock and broke the chain. the man couldn't walk. He'd been there for a day. He told Dave hes name was Charlie Smith and he escaped from the near by prison. These scared Dave and Daisy, but they couldn't leave him there to die.

They tried to find a way so that they could get out of the cave, David saw light coming out from behind a

rock. He told Daisy and Charlie that he had found a way out. So David carried Charlie to the exit that was behind the rock. David and Daisy pushed the rock for a half hour before it moved. When they got out of the cave they went to the cabin.

There Charlie started to tell them his story. He told them that he had escaped from jail and that the jail was over on the other side of the cave. He told them that he escaped with another friend, but his friend had died in the tunnel because he was sick. He said that he made a hole ~~and went when~~ and when he got into the cave, a rock fell and caught his ball and chain. He couldn't get up. When he heard David and Daisy in the cave, he fired the gun he stole from a guard to get their attention. Thats when Daisy found him.

After hearing the story, Daisy excused herself to go to the bathroom she called the police from the bedroom. She comes back and pretended nothing happened. In about fifteen minutes,

the police Knocked on the door. Daisy let them in. That's when they discovered Charlie's true indentify. The police said Charlie was really Bob Creoler, the notorious honeymoon couple serial Killer. Bob had killed three couples at Silver Creek Forest in the last week. David and Daisy got a three thousand dollar reward. Now they can go to Hawaii where they don't think they'll hear any more strange noises, or will they...?

Elaborated Story (score of 6). Few papers were considered to be *Elaborated Stories.* To be classified as elaborated, stories had to present a sequence of episodes in which almost all of the events and story elements were well developed. Goals or problems introduced in the beginning were well resolved by the end, characters' motives were well developed, and the entire story was a cohesive, unified whole. In the example below, an eighth-grader writes a compelling story about a football game. In it, the writer effectively presents each episode, leading to the over-time ending.

English

It was a brisk Monday night. I had just come back from CCD, and was getting ready to watch the game. I turned on channel seven and sat down. The pregame show was just about to start, so I went to the bathroom. When I came back the announcers were talking about the weather and how cold it would be in Chicago. The Jets were not used to this frosty atmosphere.

The Jets won the coin toss and elected to recieve. Terence Mathis, of the Jets, was standing at the twenty yard line, waiting for Kevin Butler to boot the ball at him. Mathis caught the ball and downed it in the endzone. The Jets scored a touchdown on their opening drive.

For three quarters, the two teams beat on each other with a vengance. The Jets were wining 21-14 late in the fourth quarter with five minutes remaining. The Jets Pat Leahy kicked off and the Bears started their critical drive on the twenty yarline.

The Bears quarterback, Jim Haurbaugh called hike, and the center snapped the ball. Harbaugh dropped back in the pocket and saw the WR, Waddle of the Bears, and hit him with a thirty yard bomb. The next play, the quarterback called a handoff to Neal Anderson, the Bears running back. He jetted down field like a bandit being chased by a cop. Suddenly the Bears were deep into Het Territory. The Bears Fans were going wild in the stands. They were already in field goal range, but a touchdown would only be valid. They were on the Jets five yard line with 0.59 seconds remaining and no timeouts. Harbaugh called hike and handed off to Anderson, he was stuffed by the men in green, a loss of two. Second down and goal and Harbaugh throws incomplete. He throws incomplete one final time, and the Bears were faced with a fourth down and seven situation. They had to go for the touchdown. Harbaugh a quaterback sneak and was instantly crushed by a swarm of Jets led by Jeff Lageman. It appeared the Jets had won the game. The Jets would take over on the Bear seven yard line.

Bruce Coslet coach of the Jets, elected to stay with the ball instead of punting with 21 seconds left.

The Jets handed off twice successfully with ten seconds remaing. Then Blair Thomas recived a handoff from the Jets quarterback O.Brien, he had never fumbled in his life. Now he had fumbled once. The Bears went for the ball that was in his hand like it was a bar of gold. The stadium was hoing to erupt. The Jets were in shock, I was in Shock. Then I said to myself what do I have to worry about. The chances of them scoring a touchdown were one in a million. The Bears had the ball with 3 seconds

left and one play. It was do or die for the Bears. Harbaugh called hike, I wasn't nervous not even for one second, until I saw the Bear runing back, Anderson, charge down field. I screamed at the television cover Anderson, cover Anderson! Harbaugh must have heard me, because that exact second, he threw the ball right into Anderson's hands in the endzone. I was staring at the television in disbelief. Butler of the Bears tacked on the extra point. The game was tied at 21. The game had been reborn. We would have overtime. It was 1:15 in the morning, there was no way I could sleep now.

The Jets won the cointoss and elected to recieve. Before I could blink, the Jets were on the Bear twenty yard line. The Jets sent out the fieldgoal unit. I thought this game was in the bag. The snap came down, Leahy kicked, and it was wide. Now I was mad, oppurtunity knocked at the Jets door but the never answered.

The Bears would take over on their own fifthteen yardline. As the tension built, this contest seemed it would never end. I was thinking about the hell I would go through in school tommorow if the Jets had dropped this game. There were 1:05 seconds remaining in overtime. I was proying for an interception. The Bears did not want a fieldgoal. Harbaugh fell back in the pocket and hit Wendell Davis, WR of the Bears in the endzone. The Bears had won. I couldn't believe it. I almost started to cry. They were so close, but never won. I will never forget that September 23-24, on a frosty, Monday night.

Informative Writing

The Informative Scoring Guide. In reading and evaluating the informative papers, the scoring guide development team focused on several key features of informative writing. First, they loosely defined informative writing as the presentation of information and ideas for the purpose of informing an audience. Further, in the process of presenting information, the writer establishes relationships between pieces of information and/or ideas. The papers were then classified according to how well the writers had succeeded in establishing relationships and according to how well they presented the information to a particular audience for a specific purpose.

The differences between levels one through four are the degree to which the writers established relationships between the pieces of information in their papers. The difference between levels five and six is the degree to which the writers conveyed a sense of audience and purpose. This was often accomplished through the use of an overt type of organizational structure.

Figure 2.3
Informative Scoring Guide

Writing about a topic:

1 **Listing.** Paper lists pieces of information or ideas all on the same topic, but does not relate or clearly connect these pieces of information to each other. A range of information or ideas may be presented.

2 **Attempted Discussion.** Paper includes several pieces of information and some range of information. The information or ideas are now related. In part of the paper, some of the information is minimally related (in a sentence or two), but relationships may not fully be established because ideas are incomplete or undeveloped (the amount of explanation and details is limited).

Writing a theme:

3 **Undeveloped Discussion.** Paper includes a broad range of information or ideas and some of the ideas or pieces of information are related. The relationships are somewhat established, (in several sentences) but not completely. The ideas are confused, contradictory, out of sequence, illogical, or undeveloped.

4 **Discussion.** Paper includes a broad range of information or ideas and, in at least one section, clearly relates the ideas or information using devices (such as temporal order, classification, comparison/contrast, cause and effect, problem/solution, goals/resolutions, predictions, speculations, suppositions, drawing conclusion, point of view, ranking by importance, exemplification, illustration, definition).

Writing a thesis:

5 **Developed Discussion.** Paper includes a broad range of information or ideas and establishes more than one kind of relationship using rhetorical devices, such as those listed above. Information, ideas and relationships are well developed, with explanations and supporting details. Paragraphs are well formed, but the paper lacks an overriding sense of purpose and cohesion.

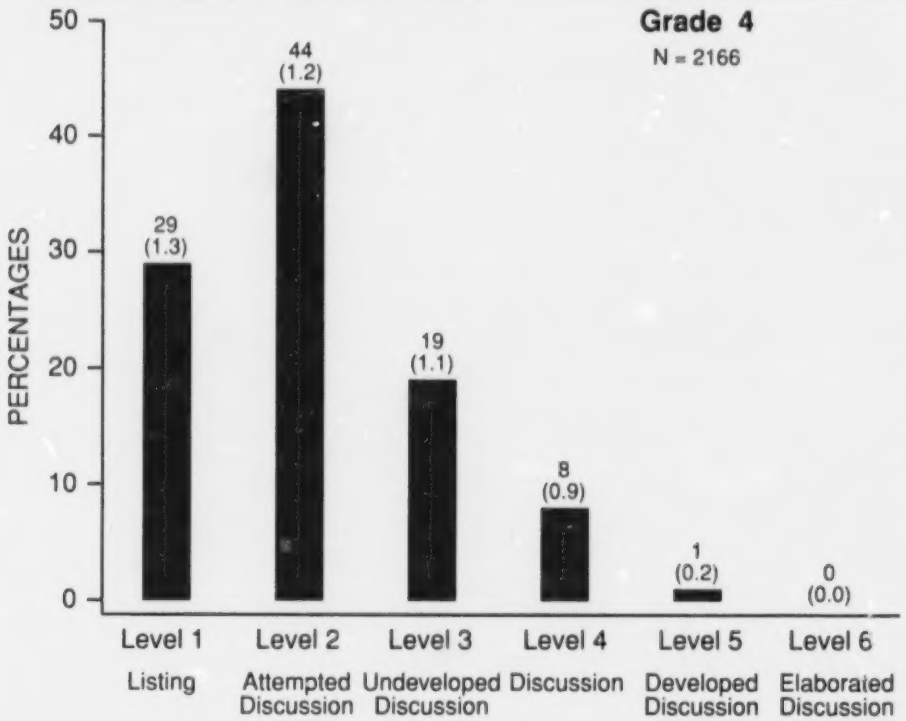
6 **Elaborated Discussion.** Paper includes a broad range of information or ideas and establishes more than one kind of relationship using rhetorical devices, such as those listed above. Information, ideas and relationships are explained and supported. The paper has a coherent sense of purpose and audience. It demonstrates a mastery of the conventions of written English (grammar, usage, mechanics) and employs a clear and effective organizational structure.

Results of the Evaluation. Figure 2.4 presents the percentage of informative papers at grades 4 and 8 at each performance level of the informative scoring guide. At the fourth grade, 29 percent of the papers were classified as *Listings*, 44 percent as *Attempted Discussions*, 19 percent as *Undeveloped Discussions*, 8 percent as *Discussions*, and 1 percent as *Partially Developed Discussions*. None of the fourth-graders submitted informative papers that could be classified as *Developed Discussions*.

As in the case of narrative papers, more of the eighth-grade papers received higher ratings than did the fourth-grade papers. Nine percent of the papers were classified as *Listings*, 34 percent as *Attempted Discussions*, 34 percent as *Undeveloped Discussions*, 19 percent as *Discussions*, 4 percent as *Partially Developed Discussions*. Very few of the eighth-grade papers were classified as *Developed Discussions*.

Figure 2.4a

Results for Informative Papers

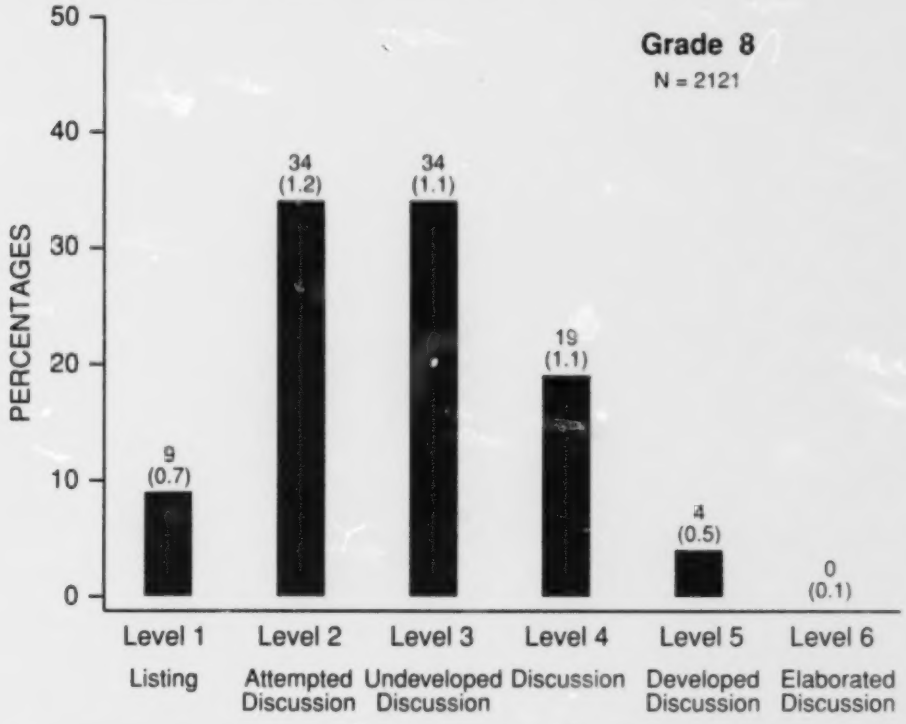


The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Figure 2.4b

Results for Informative Papers



The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Examples of Informative Papers

Listing (score of 1). In the first category, *Listing*, the writer presents pieces of information or ideas all on the same topic. While the papers may contain a range of information about the topics, no attempt is made to relate the ideas or information. For example, in the paper below, a fourth grader writes about monkeys learning to jump from trees and about blowing a bubble for the first time, all under the title "Finally Popped."

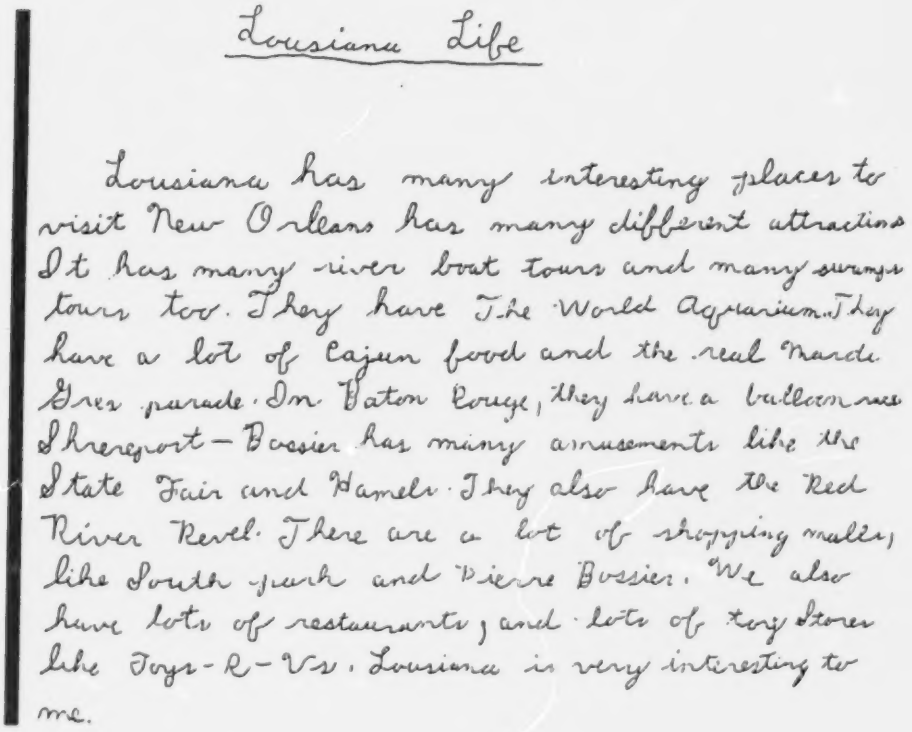
Finally Popped

By trying often the monkey learns to jump from the tree.

I didn't know how to blow bribbles until I was 7 I blew my furst bubble I felt so happy.

Attempted Discussion (score of 2). As with papers classified as *Listings*, *Attempted Discussions* present a range of information or ideas about a topic, but they go beyond *Listings* because some attempt is made to establish relationships between the pieces of information or ideas. However, these relationships are not clearly established. The ideas or information may be incomplete or undeveloped.

For example, in the paper below, the fourth-grade writer presents a range of information about things to do and see in Louisiana by identifying a feature (i.e., attractions) and then listing examples (riverboat tours and swamp tours). Yet, these examples are only mentioned and are not developed or organized into a coherent discussion.



Louisiana Life

Louisiana has many interesting places to visit New Orleans has many different attractions It has many river boat tours and many swamps tours too. They have The World Aquarium. They have a lot of Cajun food and the real Mardi Gras parade. In Baton Rouge, they have a balloon race Shreveport – Bossier has many amusements like the State Fair and Hamels. They also have the Red River Revel. There are a lot of shopping malls, like South park and Pierre Bossier. We also have lots of restaurants, and lots of toy stores like Toys-R-Us. Louisiana is very interesting to me.

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Undeveloped Discussion (score of 3). Papers classified as *Undeveloped Discussions* go beyond *Attempted Discussions* in that the attempt to establish relationships between the ideas or information is more successful. Clear connections are made between information or ideas in at least one part of the paper. However, the information and ideas are not well developed. They may be confused, contradictory, out of sequence, illogical, or undeveloped.

For example, in the paper below (written by an eighth grader), the writer introduces him or herself by describing things she or he likes and does not like. Information is not developed or elaborated.

An Introduction to Me

I have many favorites. I like to play and watch all kinds of sports. I've played baseball ever since I was seven. I also love to watch it on T.V. This year I started football this year. It is my favorite sport to play. I play defensive end on defence and guard on offence. I've also played basketball for three; the position I played was guard + forward. My favorite subjects in school are math and gym because they are the classes I get good grades in. I liked two movies that I saw this summer. One of them is Terminator 2, and the other is Boyz in the Hood.

Some of the music I don't like are classical, opera, and gospil. The sports I really don't like is soccer is because I've never played it and I probably never will, but I like to watch it on TV or to one of my friends games. At school, I don't like science very well so far or health. And I hate to eat ~~Brus~~ brussel sprouts and spinach. And this paragraph is about all my favorite things, and all the things I hate.

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Discussion (score of 4). *Discussions* are more complex than *Attempted Discussions* or *Undeveloped Discussions* because, in at least one section, the writers clearly relate the ideas or information. A signal of this level of development is the use of rhetorical devices (such as temporal order, classification, definition, comparison/contrast, cause and effect, problem/solution, goals/resolutions, predictions, speculations, drawing conclusions, point of view, ranking by importance, exemplification) to relate some of the information and ideas presented. However, these papers do not take the next step and relate all of the ideas or information presented to an overarching purpose. Thus, while these papers retain their focus on the main topic being addressed, they also seem to skip from subtopic to subtopic.

For example, in the paper below, the fourth-grade writer compares and contrasts cars and airplanes. While this analysis of cars and airplanes is clearly written, it appears to be written out of context. Without an overall purpose or audience for the information presented, the features upon which the writer selected to base his or her comparison appear arbitrary.

There can be both comparisons and contrasts between airplanes and cars. They are alike in several ways. They both are forms of transportation. The two use petroleum to run their engines, and they can both transport more then one person. Airplanes and cars ride on rubber tires. A person who drives a car and one who flies an airplane needs a license to drive or fly.

Airplanes and cars are different in a lot of ways. An airplane flies in the air while the car rides on the ground. Airplanes can carry hundreds of people while the car can carry only eight. Airplanes are manufactured by only a few companies, but cars have many manufacturing companies. Airplanes travel at high speeds, but cars travel at lower speeds. Airplanes carry cargo as well as people, but cars carry people as well as their belongings. When airplanes are not being used, they are stored in hangers and cars are put in garages.

Airplanes and cars are alike in many ways. They also have a lot of things that make them different.

Developed Discussion (score of 5). In *Developed Discussions*, information and relationships are established and well developed, with explanations and supporting details. The paragraphs tend to be unified and well formed. However, the paper lacks an overriding sense of purpose, audience, and cohesion. The writers of these papers present a wide range of information on a topic, organize this information clearly, develop most of the aspects of this topic, yet do not create a context for their discussion that envisions a wider communicative purpose.

For example, the eighth-grade writer of the paper below presents several examples about the theme of *The Diary of Anne Frank*. However, the paper lacks a sense of purpose and audience. The introduction is brief and there is no conclusion. What results is a series of well-developed examples rather than a discussion or theme.

Essay for "Diary of Anne Frank".

The "Diary of Anne Frank" has been described as "a living tribute to the dignity, courage, and perseverance of the human spirit." There are many examples that would portray this theme of the story.

The first example has to do with the courage that Miep and Mr. Kraler had. They hid the Franks', the Van Daans; and Mr. Dussel for two years in a hidden apartment in a building that was a warehouse and office building combined. They took very serious risks because if somebody found out, Miep and Mr. Kraler (even though Jewish), would suffer the same penalties as the Jews. For two years, they had to live their life with courage, hoping that no one would find out.

There is another example that deals with courage. The Franks' and the Van Daans' packed up their belongings one day and just left. The beds were left unmade and the dishes were dirty. They all piled layers and layers of clothes on, including winter coats, and it was the middle of summer. It was courageous of them to walk around the streets hoping that the Nazi police wouldn't find them, which is one reason why they left so early in the morning. Both of these examples refer back to the theme because they explain the courage that everyone had.

Another example that would support this theme is when Anne talks to Peter. Peter was feeling very uptight and couldn't stand being in hiding any longer. He said he would go crazy if they don't get out soon. Anne feels bad for Peter and talks to him. She said that whenever she feels uptight about being in hiding, she just imagines herself outside taking a walk with flowers all around. She also practices her religon, which gives her something to believe in. This supports the teme because even though times are bad, they still try to think of good things to help them survive.

if they had nothing to think of or look forward to, they probably all would have gone crazy.

The next example has to do with the shortage of food. There was very little food and everyone had to split it. Most of the time the food did not fill them up and their stomachs were left growling. If they were at home, they probably would eat much more, and take their food for granted. There also was not much sleeping space. Everyone was cramped together and it was very uncomfortable. These are examples of the theme because it is about their ability to survive. Even though things were tough, they still survived and tried their hardest to make things fair.

Another example is when Mrs. Frank stood up to Mrs. Van Daan. Mr. Van Daan had been stealing food, and Mrs. Frank found out. She was very angry because she felt that the food should go to the children. Mrs. Van Daan became protective of her husband and agreed that he should have more food than her own child. Mrs.

Frank got so mad and let her feelings all out. She had the pride in herself to say everything on her mind which she has held back for so long. This supports the theme because it shows the dignity that Mrs. Frank had. She finally stood up for what she believed in.

The last example is when Mr. Frank says, "For the past two years we have lived in fear. Now we can live in hope." Ever since they went into hiding, they have been afraid of getting caught. Now that they were caught, they could only hope that nothing too bad happens and that everything works out alright. This shows the hope that Mr. Frank has that they will all be alright. He has to believe in himself and his family and hope that nothing goes wrong.

Elaborated Discussion (score of 6). For papers to be considered *Elaborated Discussions* they had to contain all the elements of the previous category, and also present a coherent sense of purpose and audience. A signal of this level of writing is the overt use of organizational structure and excellent command of the conventions of written English. In the example below, the eighth-grade writer is able to connect several well-developed explanations of the character of Squealer to broader themes of *Animal Farm*.

This paper gives you a look at the character Squealer from the book Animal Farm.

Throughout the whole story, Squealer portrays the role of the town messenger. He reports all messages to the animals that leader Napoleon tells him to report. No matter what the message is, whether it be the truth or a lie, Squealer somehow manages to report the news as it being the best solution or idea. Because of Squealer's wonderful gift of speech he is trusted and respected by all the animals.

From early on in the story I noticed that Squealer was the wheeler and dealer of Animal Farm. The other animals said that he could turn black into white. The first example of his brilliant speaking abilities was when the issue of why all the apples were being sent to the pigs was brought up. Squealer was sent to make all of the necessary explanations to the others. He claimed that the pigs were not taking because they enjoy them, but that they were needed to keep the pigs healthy so that they could watch out for the other animals welfare. Squealer also just happened to mention that if the

pigs were not healthy they could not look out for their enemy Mr. Jones. He stressed this point heavily. When it was put to the animals in this light, they had no choice but to give all of the apples to the pigs.

A second time when Squealer twisted the truth was directly after the banishment of Snowball. Squealer was sent by Napoleon to explain the new situation to the other animals. In his speech, Squealer continually praises Napoleon for taking on the leadership responsibilities by himself. He also tries to make the animals forget all about Snowball and to only trust Napoleon.

Squealer again explains that Napoleon will keep Jones away. Since no animal wanted Jones back, they had no choice except to follow and trust Napoleon.

As you can see, when Napoleon wants something accomplished Squealer is the official spokesperson. It is Squealer's duty to make his leader look good. Squealer becomes the official propagandist for Napoleon and the pigs. As a skilled speaker Squealer controls communication and in turn has the power to create truth.

Persuasive Writing

The Persuasive Scoring Guide. In reading and evaluating the persuasive papers, the scoring guide development team focused on several key features of persuasive discourse: stating an opinion or position, supporting one's opinion with reasons and/or explanation, and appropriately addressing one's audience. Thus, the 114 fourth-grade and 410 eighth-grade persuasive papers submitted by students in 1992 were placed along a continuum of persuasive complexity, ranging from opinion to argument to elaborated argument.

Figure 2.5
Persuasive Scoring Guide

Writing about an opinion:

1 **Opinion.** Paper is a statement of opinion, but no reasons are given to support the opinion, or the reasons given are inconsistent or unrelated to the opinion.

2 **Extended Opinion.** Paper states opinion and gives reasons to support the opinion, but the reasons are not explained or the explanations given are incoherent or confusing.

Attempting to present an argument:

3 **Elaborated Opinion.** Paper states opinion and gives reasons to support the opinion, plus attempts to develop the opinion with further explanation. However, the explanations given are not developed. These reasons may include benefits or positive outcomes that will result from the desired action or position. These papers may also contain a brief reference to the opposite point of view.

4 **Argument.** Paper states opinion, gives reasons to support the opinion, plus explanations, with at least one explanation developed through the use of devices (such as personal experience, exemplification, sequence of events, cause and effect, comparison/contrast, classification, problem/solution, point of view, drawing conclusions). However, the argument is weak or unconvincing because the development of the reasons is thin, vague, illogical, inconsistent, repetitive, or disjointed. It may contain a brief summary of the opposite point of view.

Presenting an argument:

5 **Developed Argument.** Paper states opinion and reasons to support the opinion. It also presents several clearly developed explanations in support of the argument (through the use of devices such as those listed above). It also demonstrates an awareness of audience through the use of voice and/or selection of supporting details. It may contain a summary of the opposite point of view.

6 **Elaborated Argument.** Paper states opinion and reasons to support the opinion. It also presents well-developed explanations in support of the argument. It demonstrates an awareness of audience through the use of voice and/or selection of effective supporting details. It may contain a summary and refutation of the opposite point of view.

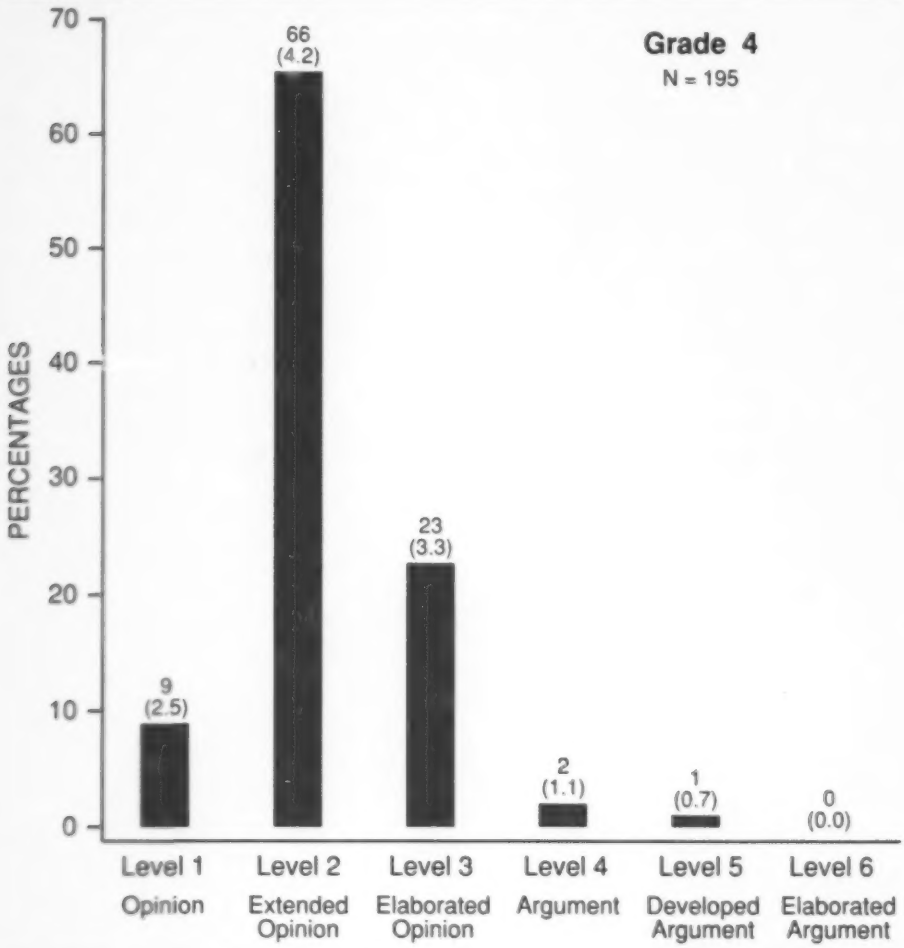
Results of the Evaluation. Figure 2.6 presents the percentage of persuasive papers at grades 4 and 8 at each level of the persuasive scoring guide. Please note that only 195 of the papers submitted by fourth graders were persuasive, so that the percentages for the fourth grade should be interpreted with caution.

At the fourth grade, 9 percent of the papers were classified as *Opinions*, 66 percent as *Extended Opinions*, 23 percent as *Elaborated Opinions*, 2 percent as *Arguments*, and 1 percent were classified as *Developed Arguments*. None of the fourth-grade persuasive portfolio writing was classified as an *Elaborated Argument*.

At the eighth grade, 3 percent of the papers were classified as *Opinions*, 33 percent as *Extended Opinions*, 38 percent as *Elaborated Opinions*, 23 percent as *Arguments*, 3 percent as *Developed Arguments*, and 1 percent were classified as *Elaborated Arguments*.

Figure 2.6a

Results for Persuasive Papers

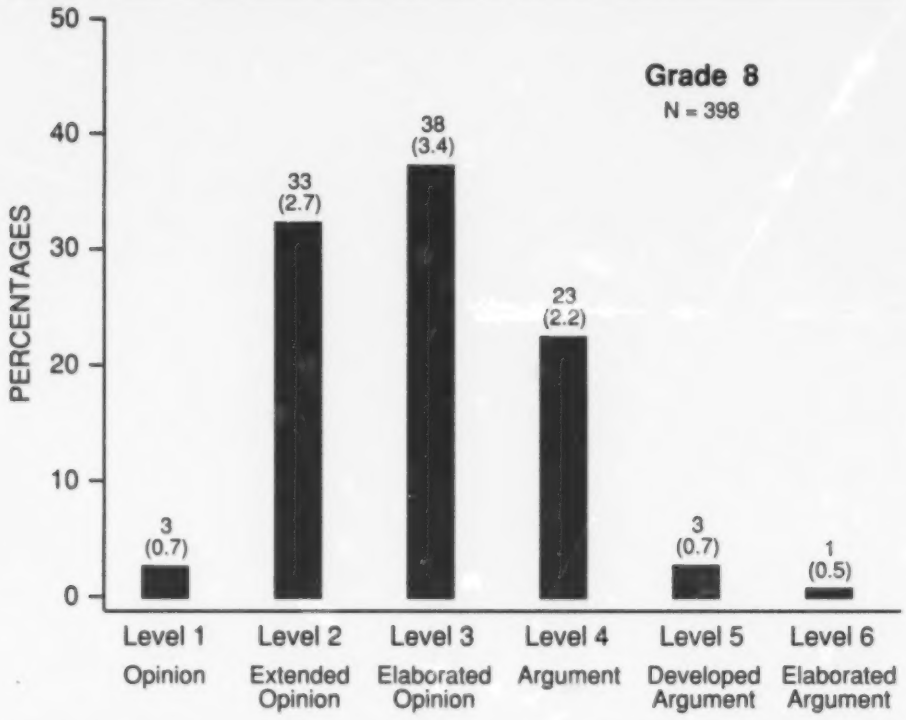


The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Figure 2.6b

Results for Persuasive Papers



The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Examples of Persuasive Papers

Opinion (score of 1). In the first type of persuasive writing, *Opinions*, the writers assert opinions, but do not develop or explain these opinions in any detail. Sometimes they give reasons to support their opinion, but these reasons are unrelated to the opinion or contradict one another. For example, the paper below, written by an eighth grader, states an opinion about how one should behave when attending a school activity and gives several examples of appropriate behavior, but never explains why one should follow the advice given.

Team Support

When youre attending a school activity you should support the students instead of having a social hour. First of all, when youre listening to the band or orchestra, you should be quiet and pay close attention to their performance. When youre at a sports event you should get involved in the game or match. Students need to show more school spirt.

Extended Opinion (score of 2). *Extended Opinions* include statements of opinion and reasons to support the opinion. However, the reasons are only briefly presented or the explanations are confusing.

For example, the paper below, written by a fourth grader, states an opinion ("Please stop killing whales.") and lists several reasons in support of this opinion ("They will become endangered." "It is not worth it."). However, none of these reasons are developed. The letter is more of a plea than a persuasive piece.

Dear Whale Killers.

Please stop killing whales espeaialy Balooga whales. If you kee-p killing them they will become an endanged species. It is not worth it to happen. There will not be any more whales. The meat may be worth it but killing them isn't. It is your choice we need your help! Please stop for the whales. We like the whales and we do not want them killed.

Sincerely,

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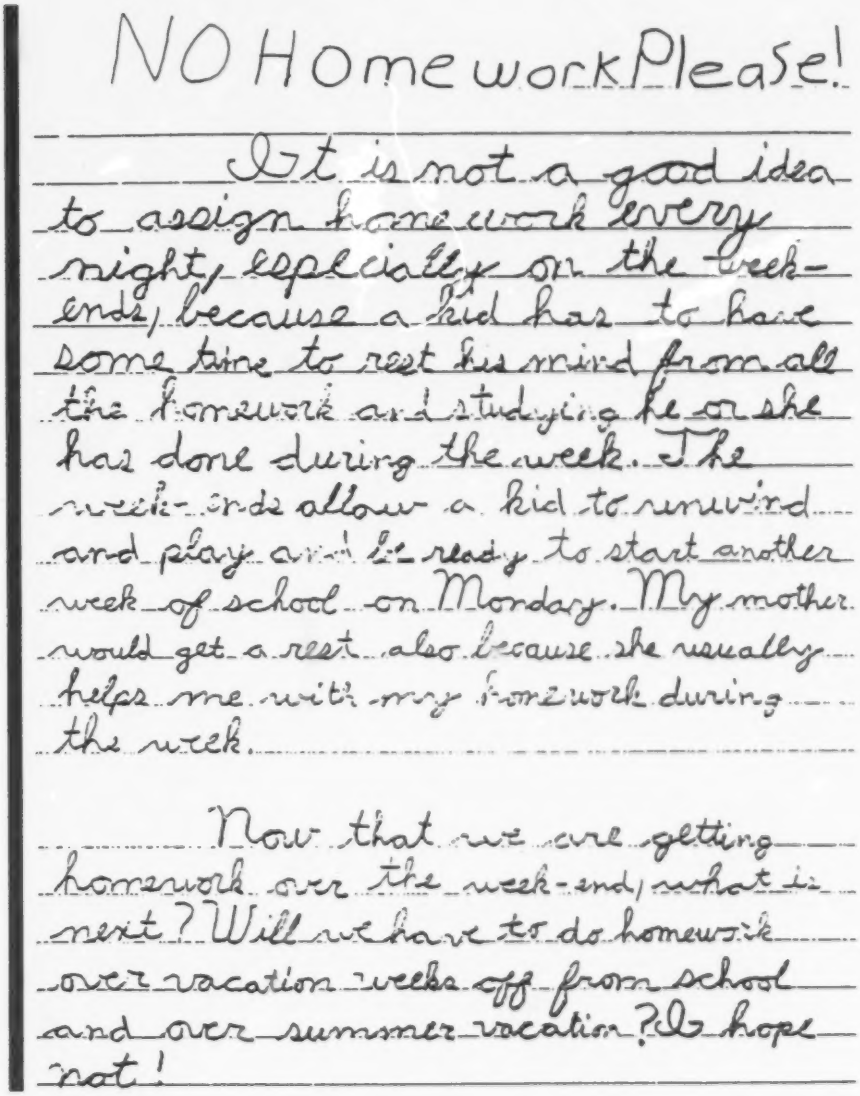
Elaborated Opinion (score of 3). *Elaborated Opinions* include opinion statements and clear reasons to support the opinions. They also contain attempts to develop opinions with further explanation. However, the explanations given are not developed or elaborated. These papers may also contain implicit references to an opposing point of view opposite the writer's own. For example, the eighth-grade writer of the paper below states an opinion ("No homework please!") and gives reasons to support this opinion. However, the reasons are only briefly elaborated.



NO Homework Please!

It is not a good idea to assign homework every night, especially on the week-ends, because a kid has to have some time to rest his mind from all the homework and studying he or she has done during the week. The week-ends allow a kid to unwind and play and be ready to start another week of school on Monday. My mother would get a rest also because she usually helps me with my homework during the week.

Now that we are getting homework over the week-end, what is next? Will we have to do homework over vacation weeks off from school and over summer vacation? I do hope not!

Argument (score of 4). In *Arguments*, writers state their opinions with reasons to support those opinions. They also include at least one explanation that is well developed. Rhetorical devices (such as cause and effect, comparison/contrast, problem/solution, and classification) may be used to develop the explanation. These papers may also contain brief summaries of the opposite point of view.

For example, in the paper below, the eighth-grade writer presents a clear opinion, with elaborated reasons to support the opinion. This writer uses cause and effect to develop his/her argument and organizes the argument into three sections, based on those who would be adversely affected by mandatory homework for students.

Dear Principal,

I have been informed that you would like to have the teachers issue two hours of homework seven days a week for the students. I am opposed to this issue. My reasons to support my opinion are the teachers, parents, and the students.

My first reason is the teachers. If you make the teachers to where they have to issue homework every night, then they will have more papers to grade, which will take away their extra time. The teachers would also have extra planning to do, and they would go faster in the book because there would be an assignment every night. The teachers would also have stress from all the papers, planning, and the bad grades. Which would make them take more days off and more subs would be needed.

Secondly, the parents would be affected because all the homework would take away the students from the family due to all the homework. The parents would also suffer with stress from helping the students with all the homework.

Good

Last, the students would suffer the most because all of the homework. The homework would cause the student to have alot of stress. When students have stress it will cause them to drop-out and with this added stress the drop-out rate would increase. The drop-out rate would create extra stress on the principal. Also, the student's social time will suffer from the added homework. If the students are spending all their time doing homework they would have no social, because there would be no time to go out on dates. The students free time would suffer some also because if they made some extra time for a few dates than they would have any time to relax, or take it easy, if all their time was spent on homework.

In conclusion, I realize that you have spent lots of time thinking about this issue and putting it into action. However, I am still opposed to this issue. Thank you for your time and considerance in reading my viewpoint.

SINCERELY,

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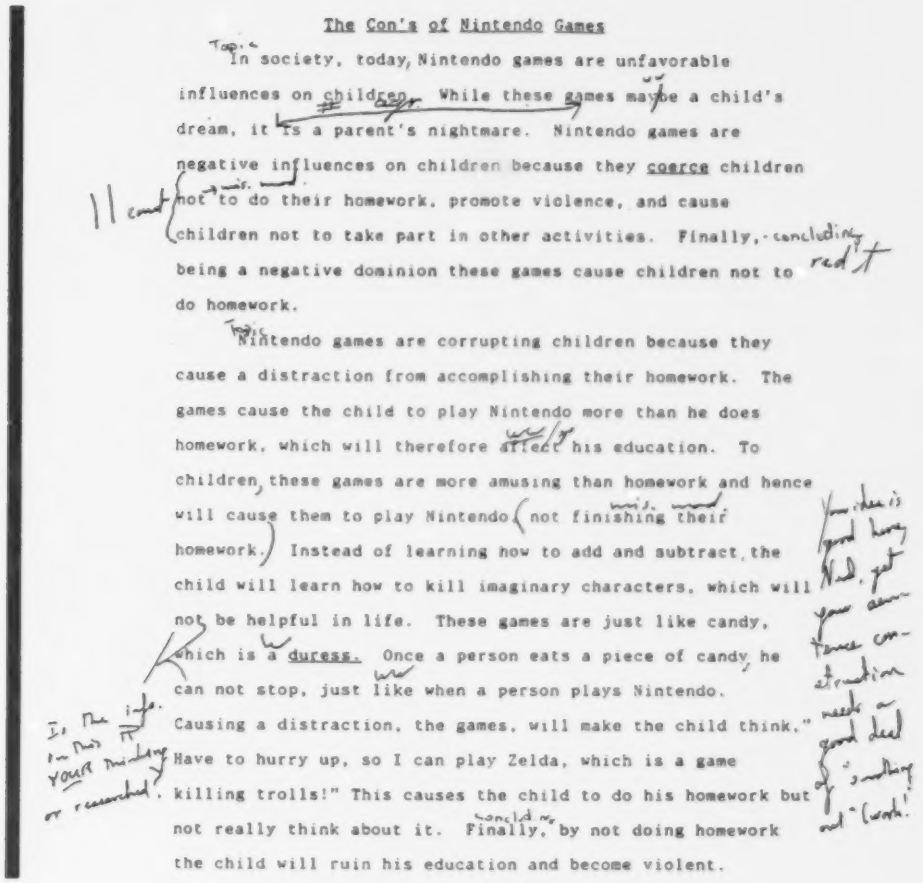
Developed Argument (score of 5). *Developed Arguments* include clear opinion statements, with reasons to support the opinions and developed explanations. These papers also show an awareness of audience through the use of voice and/or the selection of effective supporting details and may have a summary of the opposite point of view. In the example below, an eighth-grader's first draft of an essay about the negative influences of Nintendo video games, the student discusses each point of his/her argument in detail, including references to why children find Nintendo appealing. (Side note: The underlined words in this example were from a vocabulary list the student was directed to make use of when writing this paper.)



The Con's of Nintendo Games

In society, today, Nintendo games are unfavorable influences on children. While these games maybe a child's dream, it is a parent's nightmare. Nintendo games are negative influences on children because they coerce children not to do their homework, promote violence, and cause children not to take part in other activities. Finally, being a negative dominion these games cause children not to do homework.

Nintendo games are corrupting children because they cause a distraction from accomplishing their homework. The games cause the child to play Nintendo more than he does homework, which will therefore affect his education. To children, these games are more amusing than homework and hence will cause them to play Nintendo (not finishing their homework.) Instead of learning how to add and subtract, the child will learn how to kill imaginary characters, which will not be helpful in life. These games are just like candy, which is a duress. Once a person eats a piece of candy, he can not stop, just like when a person plays Nintendo. Causing a distraction, the games, will make the child think, "Have to hurry up, so I can play Zelda, which is a game killing trolls!" This causes the child to do his homework but not really think about it. Finally, by not doing homework the child will ruin his education and become violent.

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Promoting violence, these games are adverse influences on children. By using famous people, the games promotes violence and also, these celebrities are used to bolster the them. Nintendo games advocate brutality by using an arsenal of weapons to kill people and show that a person gets three lives even though in real life, a person really gets one chance to get it right. Rubbing off on the children, who play these games, the violence will affect their behavior drastically. They will become more brutal and violent and consequently will turn into bellicose people. By using a cartoon character, Bart Simpson, in the game " Simpsons verse The Aliens," the game promotes violence by showing Bart jump out a window on a skateboard and live whereas in real life a person would die instantaneously. ~~In conclusion,~~ Nintendo games promote violence by using famous people and causes a distraction to participate in other activities.

Thirdly, Nintendo games cause a child to only play these games while the child does not associate with his parents or participate in different activities. Nintendo games manipulate the child to keep playing even though his parents want to talk with the child. This ~~would probably~~ cause a separated family because there is no communication between the parent and the child. Also, these games will cause the child to become fat and have muscle atrophy ~~away~~ because he doesn't participate in any other activities. The fattening of the child will be attributed to these nightmares because the child just sits in front of the T.V., does not participate in sports, or go outside when there is beautiful weather. Finally, Nintendo games cause the child not to perform in other, diurnal activities.

Finally, by a parent not letting their sibling play Nintendo games, they would probably be stopping all these horrible events to happen. By the parents not wanting their child to become fat, participate in other activities, have a bad education, and become violent they should not give him this "brain killer." Playing in recreational sports, having designated reading hours, and by helping the child with his homework the problem of him playing these games too much will vanish. Finally, if parents do not wish for their children to have a bad future, the parents must say," NO" to Nintendo games.

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Elaborated Argument (score of 6). Papers at the highest level of persuasive writing contained opinion statements, reasons to support the opinion, along with well-developed explanations of these reasons. Also, through the use of voice and/or the selection of supporting details, these papers demonstrate a degree of audience awareness not found at the other levels. They may contain a summary and refutation of the opposite point of view. As the paper below illustrates, writing at this level has a unity, cohesiveness, and voice that contributes to its effectiveness.

Dear Editor:

I am a concerned student attending Carl Sandburg Middle School. I am very worried about the increasing population of the homeless. Are you aware that in our very own community, and right this minute there are homeless amongst us? These homeless have no way to help themselves,

so I've come up with a few suggestions for us to help them.

My first suggestion is to find an old building that is not in use, and let the homeless live there for free. The homeless would then be able to fill out job applications and use that building as a residency.

Next, when a homeless person finds a job, they'll ~~they~~ have to figure out a way to get there and back. So, I've come up with the idea of transportation for the homeless.

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I know this concept could cost a lot of money; however, at least the homeless are off the streets and working.

Another suggestion is to seclude a section of the main hospitals to the care of the handicapped and drug using homeless. Then, it could get the drug users off the drugs and into the real world. The handicapped would be taken care of like they are supposed to be.

There are thousands of homeless on the streets and each is out there

for a different reason. some are handicapped, some may have even lost their jobs, and some may have been involved with drugs. no matter what the reason may be, they shouldn't even be there in the first place.

I hope that you will use one of my suggestions to terminate

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the problem. If you
that if we all join to-
gether and (really) try to
help the homeless,
then any one of my
suggestions will work!
Remember,
(Remember) it may be
you out on the streets,
covered by newspapers
for warmth, and digging
into garbage cans for
a little shred of food.
I'm sure you'd like
help too, wouldn't you?
Sincerely,

Summary

The results of this study indicate that, for the most part, students' narrative writing at the fourth grade was still very rudimentary — most students seemed able to describe an event or to write about a series of events, but few could write about a sequence of episodes. More than half of the narratives selected as examples of fourth graders' best classroom writing (52 percent) were either descriptions of events or listings of related events. And while one-third of the narrative papers were classified as basic stories, only 11 percent of the narratives contained some development of plot or characters.

Of the eighth-graders' narrative papers selected as examples of their best classroom writing, fewer were rated as undeveloped and more were found to be better developed compared to the fourth-grade submissions. Only 23 percent of the students submitted papers considered to be event descriptions or undeveloped stories. As with the fourth graders, 36 percent of the eighth graders' stories were rated as basic. However, 41 percent of the eighth-grade narrative portfolio papers reached the higher levels of the scoring guide — demonstrating that these students could write about sequences of episodes rather than just an event description or series of events.

None of the informative papers submitted at either the fourth or eighth grades as examples of students' best classroom writing received the highest rating — *Developed Discussion*. To reach this level, students had to demonstrate the ability to manage a broad range of information or ideas through effective development and organization, for a specific purpose or audience. The higher levels of each of the scoring guides were designed to represent the ideal of advanced writing and the goals of many writing curriculums.

The majority of fourth-grade informative portfolio pieces (73 percent) represented basic informative writing — either a listing of information or an attempt at a discussion. At this level, students were writing about a topic. Twenty-seven percent of fourth graders' informative portfolio submissions reached the middle levels, where students were trying to write about a theme (*Undeveloped Discussion*) or were successful in writing about a theme (*Discussion*). Only 1 percent of the papers reached the upper level — writing a thesis.

By eighth grade, only 43 percent of the papers submitted were simple listings of information or attempts at discussion. The majority of the papers (53 percent) were attempts to write about a theme (*Undeveloped Discussion*)

or were successful at writing about a theme (*Discussion*). However, only 4 percent reached the upper level of writing a thesis.

Relatively few of the portfolio papers submitted as examples of students' best classroom-based writing could be classified as persuasive. Only 4 percent of the papers submitted by fourth graders were considered persuasive and only 9 percent of the eighth-grade papers were coded as persuasive. At the fourth grade, three-quarters of students' persuasive portfolio papers represented various ways of writing about an opinion; one-quarter made attempts at presenting an argument; and only 1 percent contained enough discussion of the opinion to be considered a presentation of an argument. The majority of the fourth-grade persuasive writing (66 percent) contained a statement of an opinion and reasons to support the opinion, but no further discussion.

By eighth grade, 61 percent of the persuasive portfolio papers were attempts at argumentation, but only 4 percent succeeded in presenting an argument. And, while few eighth graders submitted simple opinion statements, 33 percent of the papers were *Extended Opinions*.

Part II

The Best of Students' Portfolio Writing

Introduction

Due to the unique nature of NAEP assessments, the lack of a common writing context or task across students, and the great variety of writing submitted, it was not possible to have readers evaluate students' portfolios on a common scale. Students' portfolios were too different and their classroom contexts too dissimilar to permit an informed rating of whole portfolios. Instead, students' best narrative and informative pieces from among their portfolio submissions were selected for further analysis.[20]

Procedures

If an individual student's portfolio contained examples of both narrative and informative writing, then the analysis included a best narrative and a best informative piece according to the evaluative scores (see Chapter Two).

[20] See Appendix C for a discussion of the various approaches explored in designing the analysis of students' portfolios.

When a student sent in examples from only one domain, then of course, only the best piece for that domain was further analyzed. If a student sent in two narrative pieces, and both received the same evaluative score, then one was selected at random as the "best" piece.

Identifying students' best portfolio submissions enabled NAEP to address questions such as: (1) Were there any differences between male and female students' best portfolio writing? (2) Were there any differences among the best portfolio writing of students from different racial/ethnic backgrounds? (3) What aspects of process writing were associated with students' best pieces? (4) What classroom experiences were associated with their best pieces? and (5) How did students' best portfolio writing compare with their best performance on the NAEP writing assessment?

The table below presents the total number of best narrative and informative papers for grades 4 and 8. The analyses conducted in Part II were based upon information gathered about these best pieces — such as their evaluative score, length, process strategies used to produce them, and the classroom experiences of these students.

Number of Best Narrative and Informative Portfolio Papers, Grades 4 and 8*

	NUMBER OF PAPERS	
	Narrative	Informative
Grade 4	1192	1324
Grade 8	1830	1875

* 792 fourth graders and 582 eight graders submitted both narrative and informative pieces in their portfolios.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Chapter Three of this section presents information about the level of best portfolio writing for male, female, White, Black, and Hispanic fourth and eighth graders. In Chapter Four, the association between aspects of process writing and the level of students' best portfolio writing is examined and Chapter Five discusses students' general classroom experiences as they related to the level of their best portfolio writing. The last chapter, Chapter Six, examines the connection between the level of students' portfolio writing and thei performance on the NAEP writing assessment.

3

Profiles of Students' Best Portfolio Writing by Race/Ethnicity and Gender

Introduction

In this chapter, a profile of students' performance is presented for fourth and eighth graders by race/ethnicity and gender, using students' best portfolio scores for their narrative and informative writing. Thus, comparisons can be made between the levels of best portfolio writing of males and females, and among the performance levels of White, Black, and Hispanic students. To further facilitate these comparisons, students' performance was grouped into low (scores of 1 or 2), medium (scores of 3 or 4), and high (scores of 5 or 6) levels. The persuasive papers were not analyzed further because very few persuasive papers were submitted (see Chapter One). Also, the small number of Asian/Pacific Islander and American Indian students precluded reliable estimates for these subpopulations, although these students are included in the national estimates (see Appendix C).

Fourth Grade

Table 3.1 presents results for the best narrative and informative writing at grade 4 for the nation, as well as by race/ethnicity and gender.[21]

A comparison of the performance of the best narrative portfolio writing among White, Black, and Hispanic fourth graders reveals that Black and Hispanic students had similar levels of performance. Compared to their White counterparts, a higher percentage of Black and Hispanic fourth graders' narrative portfolio papers received low ratings and a lower percentage received medium ratings.[22]

For informative writing, there are no significant differences between the performance of White and Black fourth graders or between Black and Hispanic fourth graders. However, a lower percentage of the White fourth graders' best informative papers were rated as low as compared with their Hispanic counterparts.

A comparison of the best narrative writing of male and female performance reveals that a higher percentage of males' narrative papers received lower ratings (49 versus 40 percent). The difference in performance between male and female fourth graders' informative writing was not statistically significant.

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[21] For all of the tables in Part II, the first column of numbers presents the overall percentages of students for each of the row categories. For example, column one of table 3.1 shows that 74 percent of the students participating in this study who submitted narrative papers identified themselves as White; 13 percent as Black; and 9 percent as Hispanic. Forty-seven percent of these students were male and 53 percent female. The columns labeled Low, Medium, and High present the percentages of students across each row category. For example, the second row in Table 3.1 shows that, out of the participating fourth graders who identified themselves as White, 40 percent submitted narrative papers that were rated as low; 58 percent submitted narrative papers rated as medium; and 3 percent as high.

[22] For this comparison as well as all others in the remainder of the report, differences in performance are discussed only if they were found to be statistically significant as determined by an application of the Bonferonni procedure.

Table 3.1

Best Portfolio Scores for the Nation and by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, Grade 4*

	Overall Percentage	BEST PORTFOLIO SCORES** Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Narrative				
Nation	**100 (0.0)**	45 (1.7)	53 (1.8)	2 (0.5)
Race/Ethnicity				
White	**74 (1.4)**	40 (2.1)	58 (2.2)	3 (0.6)
Black	**13 (1.2)**	66 (4.2)	33 (4.1)	1 (0.9)
Hispanic	**9 (0.8)**	54 (4.0)	45 (3.9)	0 (0.2)
Gender				
Male	**47 (2.1)**	49 (1.8)	50 (1.8)	1 (0.3)
Female	**53 (2.1)**	40 (2.1)	56 (2.4)	3 (1.0)
Informative				
Nation	**100 (0.0)**	61 (2.0)	37 (2.0)	1 (0.4)
Race/Ethnicity				
White	**71 (1.1)**	59 (2.4)	39 (2.4)	1 (0.5)
Black	**15 (0.9)**	68 (3.0)	32 (3.0)	0 (0.0)
Hispanic	**9 (0.7)**	71 (4.4)	29 (4.2)	0 (0.2)
Gender				
Male	**48 (1.8)**	65 (2.7)	35 (2.8)	1 (0.4)
Female	**52 (1.8)**	59 (2.3)	40 (2.3)	1 (0.7)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Approximately 4 percent of the fourth graders in this study identified themselves as belonging to Asian/Pacific Islander or American Indian race/ethnicity groups.

**Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories. Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Eighth Grade

Table 3.2 presents the best narrative and informative writing of male and female eighth graders, as well as White, Black, and Hispanic eighth graders.

A comparison of eighth graders' best narrative writing by race/ethnicity reveals a somewhat different pattern from that of fourth graders. While a lower percentage of White eighth graders' narrative papers received low ratings and a higher percentage received high ratings compared to the narrative writing of Black students, the differences in performance between White and Hispanic eighth graders were not statistically significant.

For informative writing, more White eighth graders' best informative pieces received high ratings compared to Hispanic eighth graders. No other significant differences among the three groups were found.

A comparison of the best narrative writing of male and female eighth graders revealed a pattern similar to that of fourth graders: a higher percentage of males' papers received low ratings. For informative writing, a higher percentage of males' papers also received low ratings, compared to the percentage of females' papers that were rated as low.

Table 3.2

Best Portfolio Scores for the Nation and by Race/Ethnicity and Gender, Grade 8*

		BEST PORTFOLIO SCORES**		
	Overall Percentage	Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Narrative				
Nation	**100 (0.0)**	21 (1.8)	64 (1.8)	14 (1.1)
Race/Ethnicity				
White	**76 (1.3)**	18 (2.0)	66 (2.0)	16 (1.2)
Black	**12 (0.9)**	36 (5.6)	57 (5.0)	7 (3.4)
Hispanic	**8 (0.9)**	29 (4.3)	62 (4.4)	9 (2.9)
Gender				
Male	**50 (2.0)**	26 (2.3)	62 (3.0)	12 (1.7)
Female	**50 (2.0)**	17 (2.4)	67 (2.2)	16 (1.7)
Informative				
Nation	**100 (0.0)**	31 (1.6)	62 (1.4)	7 (0.8)
Race/Ethnicity				
White	**72 (1.3)**	30 (1.9)	62 (1.8)	8 (1.0)
Black	**15 (1.1)**	35 (4.4)	62 (4.1)	4 (1.7)
Hispanic	**9 (0.8)**	32 (5.2)	65 (5.0)	3 (1.3)
Gender				
Male	**52 (1.6)**	35 (2.1)	60 (1.8)	6 (0.8)
Female	**48 (1.6)**	26 (2.2)	65 (2.1)	9 (1.4)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Approximately 4 percent of the fourth graders in this study identified themselves as belonging to Asian/Pacific Islander or American Indian race/ethnicity groups.

**Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories. Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Summary

The analysis of students' best narrative portfolio writing reveals that females outperformed males, with fewer females' writing submissions receiving low ratings compared to that of males for both fourth and eighth grades. At grade 4, more White students' narrative submissions received high ratings compared to the work submitted by their Black and Hispanic counterparts. At grade 8, White students performed better than Black students on narrative writing.

The analysis of students' informative portfolio entries shows little difference at fourth grade between male and female students' performance, while at the eighth grade more male students' informative writing received low ratings. White fourth graders outperformed their Hispanic counterparts and, at grade 8, more White than Hispanic students' best informative papers received high ratings.

4

Process Writing and Students' Best Portfolio Writing

Introduction

In this chapter various features of students' best portfolio writing, identified during the descriptive analysis (see Chapter One), are related to the level of students' performance. In this way, questions such as the following can be addressed: what types of process strategies did students use to produce their best pieces; what other aspects of process approaches to writing instruction did they use; and what key features of writing are associated with students' best portfolio writing.

What Types of Process Strategies Did Students Use to Produce Their Best Portfolio Pieces?

As discussed in Chapter One, based on evidence from the teacher questionnaire, students' writing, and students' letters, students' portfolio entries were analyzed based on whether there was evidence of the use of process strategies, and if so, what kinds. The types of process strategies considered were: pre-writing, peer-conferencing, teacher conferencing, use of resources, revising, peer editing, teacher editing, and publication/sharing of a final product. Writing educators maintain that, while any of these strategies may be useful in producing effective writing, the use of several process strategies seems to be most conducive to the generation of high quality writing.[23]

Thus, the next step in the analysis was to examine the association between the level of students' best portfolio writing and the number of process strategies they used to produce these pieces. Tables 4.1 through 4.4 present information about this association for the fourth and eighth graders.

Fourth Graders. As presented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2, 34 percent of the fourth graders' best narrative writing and 33 percent of their best informative writing showed no evidence of the use of process strategies. Twenty-seven percent of their best narrative and 23 percent of their best informative writing appeared to have been written using one type of process strategy, while 39 percent of their best narrative and 43 percent of their best informative writing involved the use of two or more process strategies.

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[23] Moffet, J. and Wagner, B.J. *Student-Centered Language Arts, K-12*, fourth edition (Portsmouth, NJ: Boynton/Cook Publishers, 1992).

Table 4.1

Use of Process Strategies and Students' Best Narrative Portfolio Writing, Grade 4

Use of Process Strategies	Overall Percentage	BEST NARRATIVE PORTFOLIO SCORES* Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
No Evidence	34 (1.8)	58 (2.7)	41 (2.6)	1 (0.5)
One Strategy	27 (1.4)	44 (3.1)	55 (3.0)	1 (0.6)
Two or More Strategies	39 (2.1)	33 (2.9)	63 (3.0)	4 (1.3)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

An examination of fourth graders' best narrative writing revealed an association between their use of process strategies and their level of writing. A significantly higher percentage of the papers written without the use of process strategies received low ratings compared to those written with the use of one, or with the use of two or more process strategies. Also, a significantly higher percentage of papers written using one strategy received low ratings compared to those written using two or more strategies. A significantly higher percentage of the papers written using one strategy or using two or more strategies received medium ratings compared to the papers written without the use of process strategies.

An association also existed between the use of process strategies and the level of fourth graders' informative writing (Table 4.2). A significantly higher percentage of the papers written without the use of process strategies received low ratings compared to those written with the use of one, or with the use of two or more process strategies. Also, a significantly higher percentage of the papers written using one strategy or using two or more strategies received medium ratings compared to those written without the use of process strategies.

Table 4.2

Use of Process Strategies and Students' Best Informative Portfolio Writing, Grade 4

Use of Process Strategies	Overall Percentage	BEST INFORMATIVE PORTFOLIO SCORES* Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
No Evidence	**33 (1.6)**	72 (2.7)	27 (2.5)	0 (0.5)
One Strategy	**23 (1.5)**	58 (3.9)	41 (3.9)	0 (0.1)
Two or More Strategies	**43 (1.9)**	55 (2.8)	43 (2.8)	2 (0.8)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Eighth Graders. As presented in Tables 4.3 and 4.4, 27 percent of the eighth graders' best narrative writing and 29 percent of their best informative writing showed no evidence of the use of process strategies. Twenty-five percent of their best narrative and 24 percent of their best informative writing appeared to have been written using one type of process strategy, while 48 percent of their narrative and 47 percent of their best informative writing involved the use of two or more process strategies.

Table 4.3

Use of Process Strategies and Students' Best Narrative Portfolio Writing, Grade 8

Use of Process Strategies	Overall Percentage	BEST NARRATIVE PORTFOLIO SCORES* Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
No Evidence	**27 (2.0)**	28 (2.6)	61 (2.8)	11 (1.9)
One Strategy	**25 (1.9)**	24 (3.7)	65 (3.4)	11 (2.0)
Two or More Strategies	**48 (2.4)**	16 (2.4)	66 (2.5)	18 (1.5)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Thus, an association existed between the number of process strategies used by eighth graders to produce their best narrative writing and their levels of performance. A significantly higher percentage of the papers written without the use of process strategies received low ratings than did those written with the use of two or more process strategies. Also, a significantly higher percentage of the papers written using two or more strategies received high ratings than did those written without the use of process strategies or with the use of one strategy.

Table 4.4

Use of Process Strategies and Students' Best Informative Portfolio Writing, Grade 8

Use of Process Strategies	Overall Percentage	BEST INFORMATIVE PORTFOLIO SCORES* Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
No Evidence	**29 (1.9)**	37 (2.9)	56 (2.8)	7 (1.5)
One Strategy	**24 (1.4)**	32 (3.0)	62 (2.7)	7 (1.3)
Two or More Strategies	**47 (2.1)**	26 (2.1)	66 (2.0)	8 (1.1)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

An association also existed between the number of process strategies used by eighth graders to produce their best informative writing and their levels of performance (Table 4.4). A significantly higher percentage of the papers written without the use of process strategies received low ratings than did papers written with the use of two or more process strategies. Also, a significantly higher percentage of the papers written using two or more strategies received medium ratings than did those written without the use of process strategies.

Thus, fourth graders who used at least one process strategy to produce their best narrative or informative piece outperformed those who had not used process strategies. By the eighth grade, the difference in performance levels was between those who had not used process strategies and those who had used at least two of these strategies.

What Other Aspects of Process Approaches to Writing Instruction Were Used for Students' Best Portfolio Pieces?

Two aspects of process approaches to writing instruction that may have been involved in the production of students' best portfolio pieces were examined. These included choice of topic and type of audience.

Choice of Topic. Tables 4.5 and 4.6 present information about whether students' choice of topic was associated with the ratings their best pieces received. Only 11 percent of the fourth graders' best narrative pieces and 6 percent of their best informative pieces were composed on a topic of their own choosing.

Table 4.5

Choice of Topic for Students' Best Portfolio Writing, Grade 4

		BEST PORTFOLIO SCORES*		
Choice of Topic	Overall Percentages	Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Narrative				
Yes	**11 (0.9)**	37 (4.5)	61 (4.3)	2 (1.4)
No	**89 (0.9)**	46 (1.8)	52 (1.9)	2 (0.6)
Informative				
Yes	**6 (0.9)**	67 (7.2)	31 (6.8)	3 (2.8)
No	**94 (0.9)**	61 (2.1)	38 (2.1)	1 (0.4)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories. Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Table 4.6 presents information about eighth graders' choice of topic and their level of best portfolio writing. Only 15 percent of the eighth graders' best narrative pieces and 6 percent of their best informative pieces were composed on a topic of their choosing.

Among the students whose best narrative piece was written to a topic that they had chosen, 12 percent received low ratings, 56 percent received medium ratings, and 32 percent received high ratings. The performance of those students who did not choose their own narrative topics was different — 23 percent received low ratings, 66 percent received medium ratings, and 11 percent received high ratings. A significantly higher percentage of students who had not chosen their own topic received low ratings compared with those who had chosen their topic. Likewise, a significantly higher percentage of students who had chosen their topic received high ratings compared with those who had not chosen their topic.

Table 4.6

Choice of Topic for Students' Best Portfolio Writing, Grade 8

Choice of Topic	Overall Percentages	BEST PORTFOLIO SCORES* Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Narrative				
Yes	**15 (1.6)**	12 (2.8)	56 (5.3)	32 (5.4)
No	**85 (1.6)**	23 (2.1)	66 (1.9)	11 (1.2)
Informative				
Yes	**6 (0.9)**	33 (5.5)	53 (6.1)	14 (4.1)
No	**94 (0.9)**	31 (1.6)	63 (1.4)	7 (0.9)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories. Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

For the eighth graders' best informative pieces, among the 6 percent who wrote to a topic of their own choosing, 33 percent received low ratings, 53 percent received medium ratings, and 14 percent received high ratings. This level of performance is similar to those who did not choose their own informative topic — 31 percent received low ratings, 63 percent received medium ratings, and 7 percent received high ratings.

Thus, for fourth graders, having chosen one's own topic was not associated with higher levels of narrative or informative portfolio writing. However, at grade 8, students who had chosen the topic of their narrative pieces outperformed those who wrote to assigned topics. This association was not found for eighth-grade informative writing, where the levels of performance were similar for students who had and had not chosen their own topic.

What Other Features of Students' Writing Were Associated with Best Performance?

Two other features of students' writing were associated with the performance level of their best writing: the length of time that they spent producing their best pieces and the approximate length of these pieces.

Time Engaged in Writing Activity. In Tables 4.7 and 4.8, the levels of students' best portfolio writing at grades 4 and 8 are compared with the amounts of time their teachers reported that students had engaged in the writing activities which generated their work. Sometimes the teacher did not include information about how long the student had engaged in the writing activity (10 to 12 percent of the time). The performance of these students is reported in the row titled "Omitted".

Table 4.7

Time Engaged in Writing Activity for Students' Best Portfolio Writing, Grade 4

Time Reported by Teacher	Overall Percentage	BEST PORTFOLIO SCORES* Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Narrative				
Omitted	**10 (0.9)**	57 (3.0)	43 (3.0)	0 (0.0)
0-25 Minutes	**11 (1.0)**	72 (3.8)	28 (3.8)	0 (0.0)
26-50 Minutes	**23 (2.1)**	53 (3.4)	46 (3.6)	1 (0.8)
More Than 50 Minutes	**56 (2.4)**	34 (2.3)	63 (2.4)	3 (0.9)
Informative				
Omitted	**13 (1.6)**	66 (3.9)	34 (3.9)	0 (0.0)
0-25 Minutes	**14 (1.1)**	80 (3.3)	20 (3.2)	1 (1.0)
26-50 Minutes	**21 (1.5)**	70 (3.2)	29 (3.2)	0 (0.1)
More Than 50 Minutes	**52 (1.9)**	52 (2.6)	46 (2.7)	2 (0.6)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories. Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Eleven percent of the fourth graders' best narrative writing was produced in 25 minutes or less; 23 percent in 26-50 minutes; and 56 percent in more than 50 minutes.

At grade 4, an association existed between the amount of time spent on the best pieces and the ratings these pieces received. First, for both types of writing, a significantly higher percentage of papers written in 25 minutes or less received low ratings compared with those written in 26-50 minutes and those written in more than 50 minutes. Also, a significantly higher percentage of narrative papers written in 26-50 minutes received low ratings compared with those written in more than 50 minutes. Second, a significantly higher percentage of papers written in more than 50 minutes received medium ratings compared with those written in 26-50 minutes

and those written in 25 minutes or less. Also, for narrative writing, a significantly higher percentage of papers written in 26-50 minutes received medium ratings compared with papers written in 25 minutes or less.

Table 4.8 presents the level of eighth graders' best portfolio writing compared with the time their teachers reported that they engaged in the writing activities which had generated their work.

Table 4.8

Time Engaged in Writing Activity for Students' Best Portfolio Writing, Grade 8

Time Reported by Teacher	Overall Percentage	BEST PORTFOLIO SCORES* Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Narrative				
Omitted	**12 (1.6)**	20 (3.9)	66 (4.2)	14 (3.0)
0-25 Minutes	**7 (1.1)**	46 (9.6)	50 (9.8)	5 (4.8)
26-50 Minutes	**16 (1.9)**	33 (4.6)	62 (4.8)	5 (1.9)
More Than 50 Minutes	**66 (2.8)**	16 (1.8)	66 (2.1)	18 (1.5)
Informative				
Omitted	**12 (1.4)**	32 (3.5)	64 (3.8)	4 (1.1)
0-25 Minutes	**5 (1.1)**	58 (5.4)	42 (5.4)	0 (0.0)
26-50 Minutes	**17 (1.7)**	43 (4.0)	55 (3.9)	2 (0.8)
More Than 50 Minutes	**63 (2.5)**	23 (1.9)	67 (1.7)	10 (1.2)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories. Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

At grade 8, only 7 percent of the students' best narrative writing was produced in 25 minutes or less; 16 percent in 26-50 minutes; and 66 percent in more than 50 minutes. Among the small percentage of papers written in 25 minutes or less, 46 percent received low ratings, 50 percent medium ratings, and 5 percent high ratings. Of the papers written in 26-50 minutes,

33 percent received low ratings, 62 percent medium ratings, and 5 percent high ratings. And lastly, among the papers written in more than 50 minutes, only 16 percent received low ratings, while 66 percent received medium ratings and 18 percent high ratings.

As with the fourth grade, a relationship existed between the amount of time spent on the best pieces and the ratings these pieces received for the eighth grade. First, for both types of writing, a significantly higher percentage of papers written in 25 minutes or less received low ratings compared with those written in more than 50 minutes. Also, a significantly higher percentage of papers written in 26-50 minutes received low ratings compared with those written in more than 50 minutes. Second, for informative writing a significantly higher percentage of papers written in more than 50 minutes received medium ratings compared with those written in 26-50 minutes and those written in 25 minutes or less. Lastly, a significantly higher percentage of narrative papers written in more than 50 minutes received high ratings compared with those written in 26-50 minutes; and a significantly higher percentage of informative papers written in more than 50 minutes received high ratings compared with both smaller time intervals.

The results presented above indicate a definite relationship between evaluative ratings of students' portfolio writing and the length of time students spent generating the piece of writing. The main reason teachers were asked about the length of the classroom writing activities was to obtain confirmation that students were engaging in more complex writing process activities. Following a writing process curriculum requires that activities be designed that extend over several days and involve a wide variety of reading, writing, listening, and speaking events.

While a writing activity that takes place over several class periods may not necessarily be a process-type activity, it would be difficult to develop an activity that involved drafting, peer conferencing, and revision in one class period. Thus, time is a necessary element of process writing curricula, but it is not sufficient to guarantee high-level writing — some of the portfolio entries that were the result of classroom activities extending over 50 minutes in length still received lower ratings. However, very few of the papers written in 25 minutes or less received the highest ratings.

Approximate Length of Best Portfolio Pieces. Tables 4.9 and 4.10 present information about the approximate length of students' best portfolio pieces and the level of their best pieces for grades 4 and 8.

Table 4.9

Approximate Length of Papers for Students' Best Portfolio Writing, Grade 4

Approximate Length of Papers	Overall Percentages	BEST PORTFOLIO SCORES* Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Narrative				
1-50 Words	**8 (0.8)**	96 (2.6)	4 (2.6)	0 (0.0)
51-100 Words	**24 (1.3)**	80 (2.5)	20 (2.5)	0 (0.0)
101-200 Words	**41 (2.0)**	37 (2.8)	62 (2.8)	1 (0.5)
201-400 Words	**20 (1.1)**	15 (3.3)	82 (3.5)	3 (1.4)
More Than 400 Words	**8 (1.3)**	4 (1.9)	80 (4.7)	17 (4.6)
Informative				
1-50 Words	**21 (1.8)**	97 (1.4)	3 (1.4)	0 (0.0)
51-100 Words	**35 (1.2)**	76 (2.5)	24 (2.5)	0 (0.0)
101-200 Words	**29 (1.4)**	43 (3.7)	57 (3.7)	0 (0.1)
201-400 Words	**12 (1.1)**	20 (3.5)	75 (4.1)	5 (2.4)
More Than 400 Words	**4 (0.7)**	3 (2.3)	83 (7.5)	15 (7.2)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories. Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

In considering fourth graders' best narrative portfolio writing, 8 percent were 50 words or less; 24 percent were 51-100 words long; 41 percent were 101-200 words long; 20 percent were 201-400 words long; and 8 percent were more than 400 words. In general, a higher percentage of papers that were shorter in length (100 words or less) received low ratings; and a higher percentage of longer papers (over 200 words) received medium ratings.

A similar pattern is found in fourth graders' best informative portfolio writing. Twenty-one percent of this writing was 50 words or less in length; 35 percent 51-100 words long; 29 percent 101-200 words long; 12 percent 201-400 words long; and only 4 percent was more than 400 words in length.

A higher percentage of papers of 100 words or less received low ratings, while a higher percentage of papers over 100 words received medium ratings.

Table 4.10 presents information about eighth graders' best portfolio writing and the approximate length of these papers. As shown in the first column, only 1 percent of the narrative papers were 50 words or less; 11 percent were 51-100 words long; 29 percent were 101-200 words long; 35 percent were 201-400 words long; and 25 percent were more than 400 words. In general, a higher percentage of papers that were shorter in length (200 words or less) received low ratings; a higher percentage of longer papers (over 100 words) received medium ratings; and a higher percentage of papers of more than 400 words received high ratings.

Table 4.10

Approximate Length of Papers for Students' Best Portfolio Writing, Grade 8

Approximate Length of Papers	Overall Percentages	BEST PORTFOLIO SCORES* Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Narrative				
1-50 Words	**1 (0.4)**	92(11.3)	8(11.3)	0 (0.0)
51-100 Words	**11 (1.2)**	74 (4.0)	26 (4.0)	0 (0.0)
101-200 Words	**29 (2.0)**	33 (3.0)	66 (2.9)	2 (1.2)
201-400 Words	**35 (1.8)**	7 (1.6)	87 (1.7)	6 (1.2)
More Than 400 Words	**25 (1.9)**	2 (1.0)	51 (3.2)	47 (3.4)
Informative				
1-50 Words	**4 (0.7)**	90 (5.0)	7 (3.8)	3 (2.9)
51-100 Words	**21 (1.3)**	66 (2.8)	34 (2.8)	0 (0.0)
101-200 Words	**36 (1.8)**	29 (2.1)	71 (2.1)	0 (0.0)
201-400 Words	**26 (1.7)**	7 (1.5)	85 (1.9)	7 (1.7)
More Than 400 Words	**12 (1.4)**	3 (1.4)	55 (3.9)	42 (4.0)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories. Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

A similar pattern was found in eighth graders' best informative portfolio writing. Only 4 percent of this writing was 50 words or less in length; 21 percent 51-100 words long; 36 percent 101-200 words long; 26 percent 201-400 words long; and 12 percent more than 400 words in length. A higher percentage of papers of 200 words or less received low ratings, while a higher percentage of papers over 200 words received medium ratings. Also, a higher percentage of papers over 400 words received high ratings compared with papers of shorter lengths.

Use of Computers. Few students at the fourth or eighth grade submitted portfolio pieces that were typed or printed using a computer — less than 10 percent at grade 4 and only 15 percent at grade 8. Table 4.11 presents information about students' computer use and the level of their best portfolio writing.

For both narrative and informative fourth-grade papers, a significantly lower percentage of typed papers received low scores and a higher percentage received medium scores compared with the percentage of handwritten papers. Similarly, at grade 8, for both types of writing, a significantly lower percentage of typed papers received low scores and a higher percentage received high scores compared with handwritten papers. Thus, for both grade levels and both types of papers, computer use was associated with higher portfolio performance.

This association raises a question about whether the readers who evaluated students' portfolio writing rated typed papers higher than handwritten because they appeared to be more sophisticated, compared to the handwritten papers. So few papers submitted in portfolio folders were typed that we did not design a study specifically to address this question. However, recent research in this area reports that readers are not unduly influenced by typed papers and often they seem to expect more from typed papers and, thus, apply evaluation criteria more rigorously to typed than to handwritten papers.[24]

[24] Powers, D.E., Fowles, M.E., Farnum, M., and Ramsey, P. *Will They Think Less of My Handwritten Essay if Others Word Process Theirs?* (Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1992).

Table 4.11

Use of Computer for Students' Best Portfolio Writing, Grades 4 and 8

Choice of Topic	Overall Percentages	BEST PORTFOLIO SCORES* Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Grade 4				
Narrative				
Yes	**7 (1.1)**	19 (4.3)	71 (4.3)	10 (3.6)
No	**93 (1.1)**	47 (1.7)	52 (1.8)	2 (0.4)
Informative				
Yes	**6 (1.0)**	39 (6.5)	57 (8.1)	3 (2.8)
No	**94 (1.0)**	63 (1.9)	36 (1.9)	1 (0.4)
Grade 8				
Narrative				
Yes	**15 (1.3)**	11 (2.6)	57 (3.6)	32 (4.1)
No	**85 (1.3)**	23 (1.9)	66 (2.0)	11 (1.2)
Informative				
Yes	**15 (1.9)**	12 (2.3)	66 (2.7)	22 (3.2)
No	**85 (1.9)**	34 (1.8)	62 (1.6)	5 (0.6)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories. Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Summary

Several aspects of process approaches to writing and features of students' portfolio writing were associated with their best portfolio submissions: (1) use of process strategies; (2) choice of topic; (3) time spent writing the portfolio piece; (4) length of the portfolio piece; and (5) use of computers to produce the piece.

Students in both fourth and eighth grades who used process strategies when writing their best narrative and informative pieces outperformed those who showed no evidence of the use of process strategies. At grade 8, students who chose their own topic for their best narrative piece performed better than those who wrote to an assigned topic.

Time spent producing portfolio pieces was associated with best narrative and informative portfolio writing at both grades, with students who spent more than 50 minutes outperforming those who spent less time. The length of students' portfolio submissions also was related to the level of their narrative and informative portfolio writing. Lastly, for both fourth and eighth graders, students who produced narrative or informative writing on computer outperformed those whose papers were handwritten.

5

Classroom Contexts and Students' Best Portfolio Writing

Introduction

In considering what factors may be related to the quality of students' portfolio submissions, an analysis of the classroom contexts which generated the students' best portfolio writing was conducted. First, the types of classroom activities that generated students' best portfolio writing are presented. As was discussed in Chapter One, this information was obtained from the teacher questionnaires, the students' letters to NAEP, and any other evidence in the portfolios that may have indicated the types of activities in which the students had engaged.

Next, information about various elements of instruction and students' classroom experiences was obtained from questionnaires given to the participating fourth and eighth graders and to the teachers of the eighth-grade students at the time of the main NAEP assessment. Unlike the other

features discussed, which all related specifically to students' portfolio submissions, these elements of writing instruction relate to students' general school experiences.

This chapter first addresses the question of what types of classroom activities generated students' best portfolio pieces, and then it examines what general classroom experiences were associated with students' best portfolio writing.

What Types of Classroom Activities Generated Students' Best Portfolio Writing?

Table 5.1 presents the number of best papers received for each of the four types of classroom activities discussed in Chapter One. The proportion was similar to that of the entire set of portfolio papers: most students were engaged in integrated activities, with some responding to general prompts and a few responding to focused prompts or content reports.

Table 5.1
Number of Best Papers for Each Type of Activity, Grades 4 and 8

	4TH GRADE		8TH GRADE	
	Narrative	Informative	Narrative	Informative
General Prompts	312	322	163	253
Focused Prompts	68	82	44	98
Content Reports	7	55	8	98
Integrated Activities	638	638	583	745

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Tables 5.2 and 5.3 examine the relationship between the level of students' best portfolio writing and the types of activities to which they were responding. At the fourth grade, over half of their narrative pieces (55 percent) were written as part of integrated activities; 24 percent were written in response to general prompts; and only 5 percent to focused prompts.

Among the papers written to general prompts 55 percent received low ratings, 44 percent medium ratings, and 1 percent high ratings. Similar results occurred for the few papers written to focused prompts. In contrast, a significantly lower percentage of the papers written as part of integrated activities received low ratings (only 37 percent) and a significantly higher percentage received medium ratings (60 percent).

A similar pattern held for fourth graders' best informative writing. Almost one-quarter (23 percent) of these papers were written in response to general prompts and almost half (49 percent) were the result of integrated activities, with only 6 and 5 percent written in response to focused prompts and content reports, respectively.

Among the informative papers written to general prompts, 72 percent received low ratings, 27 percent medium ratings, and 1 percent high ratings; with similiar percentages for the few papers written to focused prompts. In contrast, a significantly lower percentage of content reports (29 percent) and integrated activities (57 percent) received low ratings compared with general prompts. Also, a significantly higher percentage of content reports (62 percent) and integrated activities (42 percent) received medium ratings compared with general prompts.

Table 5.2

Types of Writing Activities and Students' Best Portfolio Writing, Grade 4

Types of Activities	Overall Percentage	BEST PORTFOLIO SCORES* Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Narrative				
General Prompts	**24 (1.8)**	55 (2.9)	44 (2.8)	1 (0.5)
Focused Prompts	**5 (0.8)**	60 (7.0)	40 (7.0)	0 (0.0)
Content Reports	**0 (0.2)**	***	***	***
Integrated Activities	**55 (2.0)**	37 (1.9)	60 (1.8)	3 (0.9)
Unknown	**14 (1.1)**	53 (3.9)	45 (4.1)	3 (1.4)
Informative				
General Prompts	**23 (1.3)**	72 (3.0)	27 (2.8)	1 (0.6)
Focused Prompts	**6 (0.8)**	69 (7.1)	31 (7.1)	0 (0.0)
Content Reports	**5 (0.7)**	29 (6.5)	62 (8.0)	9 (5.0)
Integrated Activities	**49 (1.7)**	57 (2.5)	42 (2.5)	1 (0.6)
Unknown	**17 (1.3)**	67 (4.1)	33 (4.1)	0 (0.1)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories. Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

*** Sample size insufficient to permit reliable estimate.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Table 5.3 presents information about eighth graders' level of portfolio performance and the types of activities to which they wrote. Sixty-two percent of the eighth-grade narrative writing was written as part of integrated activities; less than one-fifth (18 percent) was written in response to general prompts; only 5 percent to focused prompts, and just 1 percent were content reports. Little difference in performance was found between papers written to these different types of activities.

As with narrative writing, 57 percent of the eighth graders' best informative writing was written as part of integrated activities. Less than one-fifth (19 percent) was written in response to general prompts and only 7 and 5 percent were written in response to focused prompts or content reports, respectively. A significantly lower percentage of content reports (8 percent) received low ratings compared with the other types of activities. Also, a significantly higher percentage of content reports (32 percent) received high ratings compared with the other types of activities. Yet, please keep in mind that only 5 percent of the eighth graders' best informative papers were content reports.

Thus, at the fourth grade, higher achievement was associated with the use of integrated activities for both narrative and informative portfolio writing. At eighth grade, however, the type of activity was unrelated to the level of narrative writing. For eighth-grade informative writing, the small percentage who submitted content reports received significantly higher ratings than those who submitted papers written in response to other types of classroom activities.

Table 5.3

Types of Writing Activities and Students' Best Portfolio Writing, Grade 8

Types of Activities	Overall Percentage	BEST PORTFOLIO SCORES* Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Narrative				
General Prompts	**18 (1.5)**	22 (3.6)	68 (3.9)	10 (3.0)
Focused Prompts	**5 (1.0)**	38 (7.6)	53 (9.4)	9 (5.6)
Content Reports	**1 (0.5)**	***	***	***
Integrated Activities	**62 (2.2)**	19 (2.0)	66 (2.2)	15 (1.2)
Unknown	**13 (1.5)**	23 (4.4)	61 (4.2)	16 (3.7)
Informative				
General Prompts	**19 (1.4)**	37 (2.7)	60 (2.7)	3 (0.6)
Focused Prompts	**7 (0.8)**	37 (5.9)	56 (6.4)	7 (3.2)
Content Reports	**5 (0.7)**	8 (2.8)	60 (5.3)	32 (6.2)
Integrated Activities	**57 (2.5)**	30 (2.1)	64 (2.0)	7 (1.2)
Unknown	**12 (1.5)**	31 (4.3)	62 (4.5)	7 (1.7)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories. Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

*** Sample size insufficient to permit reliable estimate.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

What General Classroom Experiences Were Associated with Students' Best Portfolio Writing?

Several aspects of students' classroom writing experiences were associated with the level of their best portfolio writing. This section presents information about the time students spent in and out of school on writing, the length and frequency of students' writing assignments, the use of process approaches to writing instruction, and teachers' overall ratings of their students' writing abilities. This information was provided by the questionnaires students and eighth-grade teachers answered as part of the main 1992 NAEP writing assessment.

Time Spent on Writing. Table 5.4 related eighth graders' best narrative portfolio writing to their teachers' reports about how much time they spent instructing and helping students with their writing in school each week and to how much time they expected students to spend on writing homework each week. Fourteen percent of the eighth graders who sent in narrative pieces had teachers who spent less than 30 minutes per week on in-school writing activities; 38 percent spent about 60 minutes; 22 percent spent 90 minutes; and 26 percent spent two hours or more. Twenty-six percent of the students who sent in narrative pieces had teachers who assigned less than one hour of writing homework; 34 percent about one hour; 31 percent about two hours; and 10 percent three hours.

An analysis of the different amounts of time teachers spent on writing in school each week and the level of eighth graders' narrative writing revealed no significant differences. Likewise, no differences were found in portfolio performance among students whose teachers assigned more versus less writing homework.

Table 5.4

Teachers' Reports on Time Spent on Writing Each Week in School and Out of School, Grade 8 Narrative Writing

		BEST NARRATIVE PORTFOLIO WRITING*		
	Overall Percentage	Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Time Spent on Writing in School				
Less Than 30 Minutes	**14 (2.2)**	20 (4.5)	65 (4.5)	15 (4.0)
60 Minutes	**38 (2.1)**	23 (3.1)	62 (2.4)	16 (3.1)
90 Minutes	**22 (2.1)**	23 (4.0)	65 (4.2)	11 (2.3)
2 Hours or More	**26 (2.8)**	19 (2.7)	65 (4.1)	16 (3.5)
Time Spent on Writing Out of School				
Less Than 1 Hour	**26 (2.5)**	24 (3.2)	62 (2.6)	14 (3.0)
1 Hour	**34 (2.6)**	22 (3.2)	65 (3.9)	13 (3.2)
2 Hours	**31 (2.5)**	19 (3.1)	67 (4.0)	15 (2.5)
3 Hours	**10 (1.8)**	21 (4.0)	57 (5.4)	21 (3.8)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Table 5.5 presents information about the time spent on writing each week in and out of school for the students who submitted informative writing.

Fifteen percent of the eighth graders who submitted informative pieces in their portfolios had teachers who spent less than 30 minutes on writing instruction per week; 40 percent spent about 60 minutes; 23 percent spent 90 minutes; and 23 percent spent two hours or more. Twenty-seven percent of these students' teachers reported assigning less than one hour of writing homework per week; 35 percent one hour; 28 percent two hours; and 10 percent three hours.

An examination of the relationship between the various amounts of time spent on writing in school and the level of students' best informative

portfolio writing revealed that a significantly higher percentage of students who received two or more hours of writing instruction submitted informative papers that received high ratings than students who received less than 30 minutes.

An association was also found between the amount of time eighth graders spent out of school on writing and their level of informative portfolio writing. First, of the students who spent about three hours a week on writing homework, a significantly lower percentage received low scores on their informative pieces compared with the percentages of students who spent one hour and less than one hour on writing homework. Also, a significantly higher percentage of these students received high scores on their informative pieces compared with the percentages of students who spent less than one hour a week on writing homework.

Table 5.5

Teachers' Reports on Time Spent on Writing Each Week in School and Out of School, Grade 8 Informative Writing

		BEST INFORMATIVE PORTFOLIO WRITING*		
	Overall Percentage	Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Time Spent on Writing in School				
Less Than 30 Minutes	**15 (2.2)**	37 (4.5)	60 (4.3)	3 (1.2)
60 Minutes	**40 (2.3)**	31 (2.1)	62 (2.3)	7 (1.5)
90 Minutes	**23 (2.0)**	26 (3.9)	65 (3.1)	8 (3.0)
2 Hours or More	**23 (2.3)**	26 (3.1)	64 (3.4)	10 (2.2)
Time Spent on Writing Out of School				
Less Than 1 Hour	**27 (2.4)**	39 (3.5)	58 (3.5)	3 (1.2)
1 Hour	**35 (2.6)**	29 (2.7)	64 (2.5)	7 (1.2)
2 Hours	**28 (2.6)**	25 (2.8)	66 (2.9)	9 (1.5)
3 Hours	**10 (1.8)**	16 (4.3)	62 (4.2)	22 (5.4)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Second, in considering the students who spent about two hours a week on writing homework, a significantly lower percentage received low scores on their informative pieces compared with the percentages of students who spent less than one hour on writing homework. Also, a significantly higher percentage of these students received high scores on their informative pieces compared with the percentages of students who spent less than one hour a week on writing homework.

Thus, for narrative writing there appeared to be little relationship between the amount of time spent in school and out of school on writing and the level of students' portfolio pieces, but for informative writing there was a relationship between the amount of time eighth graders spent on writing — both in school and on writing homework — and the level of their best portfolio pieces.

Length and Frequency of Writing Assignments. Eighth-grade teachers were also asked how often they gave students assignments of varying lengths. Tables 5.6 and 5.7 present information about how often the eighth graders in this study were assigned papers of short (1-2 paragraphs), medium (1-2 pages), or long (3 or more pages) length.

For the students who submitted narrative portfolio pieces, the majority of their teachers assigned papers 1-2 paragraphs long at least once a week (82 percent); 1-2 pages long once or twice a month (55 percent); and 3 or more pages never or hardly ever (54 percent).

The level of narrative portfolio papers is similar for students assigned 1-2 paragraphs and 3 or more pages. However, a significantly higher percentage of students who were never or hardly ever given assignments of 1-2 pages in length received low scores, compared to students who were given assignments of this length once or twice a month and at least once a week. Similarly, a significantly higher percentage of students who were assigned papers of 1-2 pages in length at least once a week and once or twice a month received high scores compared with those who were never or hardly ever assigned papers of this length.

Table 5.6

Teachers' Reports on How Often They Assign Papers of Varying Lengths, Grade 8 Narrative Writing

	Overall Percentages	BEST NARRATIVE PORTFOLIO WRITING* Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
1 - 2 Paragraphs				
At Least Once a Week	**82 (2.8)**	21 (2.1)	66 (2.4)	13 (1.6)
Once or Twice a Month	**16 (2.9)**	22 (3.0)	66 (3.6)	12 (2.8)
Never or Hardly Ever	**2 (1.0)**	***	***	***
1 - 2 Pages				
At Least Once a Week	**37 (2.5)**	19 (2.5)	65 (3.0)	16 (2.5)
Once or Twice a Month	**55 (2.8)**	21 (2.6)	64 (2.3)	15 (1.9)
Never or Hardly Ever	**7 (1.7)**	38 (5.3)	56 (5.4)	6 (2.1)
3 or More Pages				
At Least Once a Week	**4 (1.5)**	***	***	***
Once or Twice a Month	**41 (2.8)**	16 (2.8)	67 (2.8)	16 (2.3)
Never or Hardly Ever	**54 (2.9)**	24 (2.6)	65 (2.6)	11 (1.9)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories.

*** Sample size insufficient to permit reliable estimates.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Table 5.7 presents the results for the students who submitted informative portfolio pieces. As with those submitting narrative papers, the majority had teachers who assigned papers 1-2 paragraphs long at least once a week (80 percent); 1-2 pages long once or twice a month (51 percent); and 3 or more pages never or hardly ever (56 percent).

No significant differences were found in the level of students' portfolio writing between students who were assigned 1-2 paragraphs frequently (at least once a week), sometimes (once or twice a month), and rarely (never or hardly ever). However, a significantly higher percentage of students who were never or hardly ever given assignments of 1-2 pages in length received low scores, compared to students who were given assignments of this length once or twice a month or at least once a week. Likewise, a

significantly higher percentage of students who were assigned papers of 1-2 pages in length at least once a week and once or twice a month received medium scores compared with those who were never or hardly ever assigned papers of this length. Also, a significantly higher percentage of students whose teachers never or hardly ever made assignments of 3 or more pages in length received a low rating on their informative papers, compared with those whose teachers assigned papers of this length once or twice a month.

Thus, for both narrative and informative writing, the frequency with which teachers assigned papers of moderate length was associated with the level of students' portfolio submissions. Those who received assignments of 1-2 pages in length at least once or twice a month outperformed those who were never or hardly ever given assignments of this length.

Table 5.7

Teachers' Reports on How Often They Assign Papers of Varying Lengths, Grade 8 Informative Writing

		BEST INFORMATIVE PORTFOLIO WRITING*		
	Overall Percentages	Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
1 - 2 Paragraphs				
At Least Once a Week	**80 (3.4)**	29 (1.8)	64 (1.8)	7 (0.8)
Once or Twice a Month	**18 (3.2)**	37 (3.2)	57 (2.9)	6 (2.3)
Never or Hardly Ever	**2 (0.8)**	•••	•••	•••
1 - 2 Pages				
At Least Once a Week	**35 (2.7)**	25 (2.9)	67 (2.7)	8 (1.8)
Once or Twice a Month	**51 (3.5)**	30 (2.4)	63 (2.1)	7 (1.0)
Never or Hardly Ever	**13 (3.4)**	48 (4.4)	47 (3.5)	5 (2.4)
3 or More Pages				
At Least Once a Week	**4 (1.0)**	•••	•••	•••
Once or Twice a Month	**40 (3.2)**	24 (2.4)	65 (2.2)	11 (2.4)
Never or Hardly Ever	**56 (3.2)**	36 (2.6)	58 (2.2)	5 (1.1)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

••• Sample size insufficient to permit reliable estimate.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Teachers Use of Process Writing Approaches. The teachers of the eighth graders in this study were asked to what degree they employed process approaches to writing instruction. Table 5.8 presents the results of this inquiry.

Table 5.8

Teachers' Reports on Their Use of Process Approaches to Writing Instruction, Grade 8

	Overall Percentages	BEST PORTFOLIO SCORES* Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Narrative				
Central to Instruction	75 (2.8)	21 (2.7)	64 (2.7)	15 (1.6)
Supplement to Instruction	22 (2.4)	23 (3.6)	64 (4.3)	13 (2.2)
Not Used	3 (1.1)	***	***	***
Informative				
Central to Instruction	75 (2.6)	30 (2.2)	61 (1.9)	9 (1.3)
Supplement to Instruction	23 (2.4)	28 (3.9)	67 (4.1)	5 (1.2)
Not Used	2 (0.7)	***	***	***

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories. Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

*** Sample size insufficient to permit reliable estimate.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Three-quarters of the teachers of students who submitted narrative and informative writing reported that process approaches were central to their instruction; 22 and 23 percent said that process approaches were supplemental to their instruction; and only 3 and 2 percent said they did not use process approaches to writing instruction. Little difference was found in the levels of performance between students whose teachers said they used process approaches as either central or supplemental to their instruction.

Ongoing Use of Portfolios in the Classroom. Students' reports about the ongoing use of classroom writing portfolios were examined in relation to their narrative and informative NAEP portfolio writing. Students at grades 4 and 8 were asked whether their writing was kept in a portfolio, and their responses are presented in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9

Use of Classroom Portfolios and Students' Best Portfolio Writing, Grades 4 and 8

		BEST PORTFOLIO SCORES*		
	Overall Percentages	Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Writing Kept in Portfolio?				
Grade 4				
Narrative				
Yes	**83 (1.5)**	42 (1.8)	55 (1.8)	3 (0.7)
No	**17 (1.5)**	53 (4.5)	46 (4.4)	1 (0.6)
Informative				
Yes	**80 (1.7)**	60 (1.9)	39 (2.0)	1 (0.5)
No	**20 (1.7)**	66 (4.0)	33 (3.9)	1 (1.1)
Grade 8				
Narrative				
Yes	**82 (1.6)**	21 (2.1)	64 (2.3)	15 (1.3)
No	**18 (1.6)**	21 (3.4)	65 (3.8)	14 (3.1)
Informative				
Yes	**79 (1.7)**	29 (1.7)	64 (1.5)	7 (0.8)
No	**21 (1.7)**	35 (4.3)	57 (4.2)	9 (2.0)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories. Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

The vast majority of students at both grades reported that their classroom writing was kept in portfolios. Eighty-three percent of the fourth graders who sent in narrative pieces and 80 percent who sent in informative pieces reported that their classroom writing was kept in a portfolio. At grade 8, 82 percent of the students who sent in narrative and 79 percent who sent in informative papers said that they kept their classroom writing in portfolios.

There appears to be little relationship between this instructional practice and the level of students' NAEP portfolio writing, except for fourth-grade narrative writing. At the fourth grade, a significantly higher percentage of students who did not keep their classroom writing in portfolios received low scores on their narrative writing. This relatively low degree of correspondence may have occurred because of the variety of portfolio approaches taken by individual teachers. If portfolios are used mainly as a way of storing students' work, they may have little effect on students' writing performance. On the other hand, if portfolios are used as part of dynamic writing program, where students are writing every day and using portfolios to help structure their self-evaluations and the revisions of their work, then portfolios may be more likely to have a positive influence on students' writing performance.

Writing Ability Level. Eighth-grade teachers were asked to report on the writing ability level of the students in their classes. Table 5.10 presents the results of this inquiry for the eighth graders who submitted narrative or informative portfolio pieces.

Table 5.10

Teachers' Reports on Writing Ability Level of Class and Best Portfolio Scores, Grade 8

Writing Ability Level	Overall Percentages	BEST PORTFOLIO SCORES* Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Narrative				
High	**15 (2.0)**	12 (3.4)	63 (4.6)	25 (4.0)
Average	**31 (2.5)**	22 (3.4)	60 (3.2)	18 (1.9)
Low	**16 (2.2)**	39 (4.7)	54 (4.9)	7 (2.4)
Mixed	**39 (2.5)**	18 (2.7)	71 (3.0)	11 (2.0)
Information				
High	**12 (1.6)**	20 (3.5)	65 (4.8)	15 (4.5)
Average	**37 (2.6)**	25 (2.5)	66 (2.6)	8 (1.7)
Low	**17 (1.6)**	47 (4.6)	52 (4.6)	1 (0.5)
Mixed	**34 (2.7)**	29 (3.2)	64 (3.0)	7 (1.3)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories. Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Fifteen percent of the students who submitted narrative portfolio pieces came from high-ability classrooms, 31 percent from average-ability classrooms, 16 percent from low-ability classrooms, and 39 percent from mixed-ability classrooms. A similar pattern was found for eighth graders who submitted informative writing. Twelve percent were from high-ability classes, 37 percent from average-ability classes, 17 percent from low-ability classes, and 34 percent from mixed-ability classes.

There was an association between students' ability level (as reported by their teacher) and the scores they received on their best narrative writing. First, a significantly higher percentage of students from low-ability classes received low ratings on their narrative pieces compared with those from

high-, average-, and mixed-ability classes. Second, a significantly higher percentage of students from mixed-ability classes received medium ratings compared with students from low-ability classes. Lastly, a higher percentage of students from high-ability classes received high ratings on their narrative papers compared with students from low- and mixed-ability classes.

An association also was found between students' ability level and their best informative portfolio scores. First, a significantly higher percentage of students from low-ability classes received low scores on their informative papers compared with students from high-ability classes. Also, a higher percentage of students from average-ability classes received medium ratings on their papers compared with students from low-ability classes. And lastly, a higher percentage of students from high-ability classes had informative portfolio papers rated as high compared with students from low-ability classes.

Thus, for both narrative and informative writing submitted by eighth graders, the level of their writing was associated with the ability level of their classes.

Summary

The types of activities to which students responded in generating their narrative and informative portfolio pieces were related to the level of their writing. At the fourth grade, a higher percentage of papers that were written as part of integrated writing activities received medium ratings, whereas a higher percentage of papers that were written in response to other types of activities received low ratings. For eighth-grade informative writing, a higher percentage of papers that were content reports received medium and high ratings compared with papers written in response to other types of activities.

Among students whose teachers used various instructional characteristics, it appears that students who spent more time on writing, both in school and out of school, performed better on their portfolio writing. Also, students who were asked to write papers of medium (1-2 pages) and long (3 or more pages) lengths at least once or twice a month performed better on their portfolio writing than did those who rarely or never were asked to do so.

Most of the teachers (98 percent) of the eighth graders participating in this study reported that they used the process approach to writing instruction, as either a supplement to their program or central to their

instruction. Also, at least 79 percent of the fourth and eighth graders said that their writing was kept in portfolios. At the fourth grade, more students who did not keep their classroom writing in portfolios received low ratings on their NAEP narrative portfolio writing.

In addition, the writing ability levels of eighth graders, as reported by their classroom teachers, were associated with the level of their portfolio writing, with students from high-ability classes outperforming those from low-ability classes.

6

Comparing Students' Best Portfolio Writing with Their Best NAEP Assessment Writing

Introduction

In this chapter, students' performance on their portfolio writing is compared with their writing on the main portion of the 1992 NAEP writing assessment. As presented in the first part of this report, the NAEP writing assessment consisted of a set of writing tasks to which students had 25 or 50 minutes to respond. These tasks included a mix of narrative, informative, and persuasive topics.

This comparison is made in light of concerns among educators about the appropriateness of various methods of assessment for accurately and fairly evaluating students' writing. As was discussed in Part I, changes in approaches to writing instruction over the past thirty years have resulted in the development of new methods of assessment, such as portfolios. The effectiveness of various methods of assessment is an issue of debate among writing educators. Some educators feel that the use of more

traditional methods of assessment do not represent authentic writing situations and, therefore, do not provide students with opportunities to truly demonstrate their writing abilities. Other educators are concerned that assessments where students submit writing that was written under various conditions lack a common point of comparison and represent evaluations of instructional programs as much as of students' abilities. This study presents a unique opportunity to compare the performance of students under both conditions.

In order to compare students' portfolio and assessment writing, the type of writing students submitted was matched with the type of writing they performed on the assessment. Therefore, students' best narrative portfolio writing was compared to their best narrative assessment writing and their best informative portfolio writing was compared to their best informative assessment writing. Thus, the number of students in this comparison is somewhat less than the overall group of students who submitted narrative and informative portfolio papers, since students did not always submit the same kind of task in their portfolios as they were asked to write for the assessment.

Table 6.1 presents the number of students with both main assessment and portfolio scores in the same domain. For narrative writing, 650 fourth graders and 496 eighth graders had narrative assessment scores and submitted narrative portfolio papers. For informative writing, 723 fourth graders and 496 eighth graders responded to informative assessment tasks and submitted informative portfolio papers. (The number of students in the tables in this chapter are weighted to reflect the national population in each grade and then scaled back to the sample size.)

The portfolio performance of this smaller group of students is similar to that of the larger group. Among the fourth graders who had narrative portfolio and narrative assessment scores, 43 percent received low ratings on their narrative portfolio papers; 55 percent received medium ratings; and 2 percent received high ratings. For grade 8, 18 percent received low scores on their narrative portfolio pieces; 66 percent received medium scores; and 16 percent received high scores.

Among the fourth graders who submitted informative portfolio writing and also responded to informative assessment tasks, 61 percent received low ratings on their informative portfolio papers; 37 percent received medium ratings; and only 1 percent received high ratings. At the eighth grade, 31 percent received low scores on their informative portfolio papers; 61 percent received medium ratings; and 9 percent received high ratings.

Table 6.1

Number of Students With Both Main Assessment and Portfolio Scores in the Same Domain

		PERCENTAGES FOR PORTFOLIO SCORES*		
	Overall	Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Narrative				
Grade 4	N = 650	43 (1.6)	55 (1.8)	2 (0.7)
Grade 8	N = 496	18 (2.1)	66 (2.4)	16 (1.9)
Informative				
Grade 4	N = 723	61 (2.4)	37 (2.5)	1 (0.6)
Grade 8	N = 496	31 (1.8)	61 (1.8)	9 (1.1)

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories. Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Both the NAEP writing assessment and the NAEP portfolio study scoring systems employed six-level guides which focused on students' abilities to develop narrative, informative, and persuasive pieces of writing. However, different scoring rubrics were used to evaluate students' assessment writing and their portfolio writing; therefore, these scoring systems are not equivalent. Considering the classroom context for producing the portfolio papers, somewhat more stringent criteria were applied to these papers. Moreover, the assessment scoring guides were designed to evaluate students' responses to specific prompts or topics, while the portfolio guides were more generic.

The assessment scoring guides were designed to evaluate first-draft writing under timed conditions. These guides were written to capture a wide range of students' assessment writing. This involved describing very

limited levels of response, since some students had difficulty responding with an extensive piece of writing in an assessment situation. Also, the time limit (25 minutes) influenced the degree of development and elaboration that students' could achieve.

The portfolio scoring guides were developed to evaluate longer, more extensive pieces of work, written over a longer period of time, with the aid of a variety of resources. These guides did not have to include the minimal responses that were found in the assessment scoring guides, since students had selected their best writing to submit. Also, because students' portfolio writing often involved more preparation (pre-writing activities) and development (revision), theoretically there were no limits to the degrees of development and elaboration students could achieve.

In comparing students' performance on the main NAEP writing assessment and on their portfolio writing, it could be expected that correlation between these modes of assessment would not be strong. While some students might perform similarly on both types of assessment, others might perform better on the assessment and others on their portfolio writing. Some students might perform better on a timed assessment, where they find the topic interesting and the assessment context challenging. Other students might perform better on their classroom-based writing, where they are able to choose their own topics, consult with their peers and their teachers, and rewrite their papers several times. Thus, these two types of writing assessments provide us with information about how students write under very different conditions.

Fourth Graders

Narrative Writing. As Table 6.2 shows, more than half of the 27 percent of fourth graders who received a low score on the NAEP narrative writing assessment also received a low score on their school-based narrative writing. Forty-four percent of the students who received low ratings on their assessment writing received medium ratings on their narrative portfolio writing.

Table 6.2

Comparisons of Best Narrative Portfolio Scores and Best Narrative NAEP Assessment Scores, Grade 4

	BEST NARRATIVE PORTFOLIO SCORES*			
	Overall	Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Best Narrative Assessment Scores				
Low (1,2)	**27 (1.9) N = 175**	56 (3.3) N = 98	44 (3.3) N = 76	0 (0.3) N = 1
Medium (3,4)	**68 (1.9) N = 440**	39 (2.4) N = 172	58 (2.5) N = 257	3 (1.0) N = 11
High (5,6)	**5 (1.0) N = 35**	***	***	***

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories.

*** Sample size insufficient to permit reliable estimates.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

On the other hand, the great majority of the fourth graders (68 percent) received medium scores on their narrative assessment writing, and 39 percent of these students received low scores on their narrative portfolio writing, while 58 percent also received medium scores. Too few students received high scores on their narrative assessment writing (5 percent) to permit further analysis.

Informative Writing. Table 6.3 displays the fourth-grade informative results. Most of the fourth graders — 78 percent — received medium scores on their informative assessment writing. Among these fourth graders, 60 percent received low scores on their informative portfolio writing and only 39 percent received medium scores on their portfolio writing. Almost three-quarters (73 percent) of the few students who received low scores on their informative assessment writing also received low scores on their informative portfolio writing. The rest (27 percent) received medium scores

on their portfolio writing. Out of the few fourth graders who received high scores on their best informative assessment writing, 57 percent received low scores and 40 percent received medium scores on their informative portfolio writing, and 3 percent of the remaining students received a high score on their portfolio writing.

As a means for measuring the degree of correlation between students' performance under the two types of situations — assessment writing and classroom-based writing — a Pearson r correlation was calculated. The correlation for fourth-grade narrative writing was .20 and for informative writing it was .09. Both of these correlations are very low.[25]

Table 6.3

Comparisons of Best Informative Portfolio Scores and Best Informative NAEP Assessment Scores, Grade 4

	BEST INFORMATIVE PORTFOLIO SCORES*			
	Overall	Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Best Informative Assessment Scores				
Low (1,2)	**11 (1.2)** **N = 82**	73 (5.7) N = 60	27 (5.7) N = 22	0 (0.0) N = 0
Medium (3,4)	**78 (1.5)** **N = 562**	60 (2.9) N = 337	39 (2.9) N = 217	1 (0.6) N = 8
High (5,6)	**11 (1.3)** **N = 79**	57 (6.3) N = 45	40 (6.6) N = 32	3 (2.9) N = 3

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

[25] A test for statistical significance was conducted for these correlations and neither correlation was significantly different from 0.

Eighth Graders

Narrative Writing. As Table 6.4 shows, most students — 71 percent — received medium ratings on their assessment writing. Sixty-eight percent of these also received medium ratings on their portfolio papers, but 17 percent received low and 15 percent received high portfolio ratings. Among the 20 percent who received low ratings on their narrative assessment writing, 22 percent also received low ratings on their narrative portfolio writing, while 67 percent received medium ratings, and 11 percent received high ratings. Only 9 percent of the eighth graders (46 students) who received high scores on their narrative assessment writing also submitted narrative portfolio writing. Twenty-eight percent of these students also received high scores on their portfolio writing, but 19 percent received low scores and 53 percent received medium scores.

Table 6.4

Comparisons of Best Narrative Portfolio Scores and Best Narrative NAEP Assessment Scores, Grade 8

	BEST NARRATIVE PORTFOLIO SCORES*			
	Overall	Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Best Narrative Assessment Scores				
Low (1,2)	**20 (1.6) N = 99**	22 (3.6) N = 21	67 (3.6) N = 67	11 (3.3) N = 11
Medium (3,4)	**71 (2.0) N = 351**	17 (2.3) N = 59	68 (3.0) N = 238	15 (2.4) N = 53
High (5,6)	**9 (1.0) N = 46**	19 (4.7) N = 9	53 (6.5) N = 24	28 (6.4) N = 13

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low narrative papers were rated as Event Descriptions or Undeveloped Stories; Medium narrative papers were rated as Basic Stories or Extended Stories; and High narrative papers were rated as Developed Stories or Elaborated Stories.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Informative Writing. Table 6.5 provides the results for the informative domain for eighth grade. Again most students — 79 percent — received medium ratings on their informative assessment writing. Of these, 61 percent also received medium ratings on their informative portfolio writing. However, 30 percent of these students received low scores and 8 percent received high scores on the portfolio papers.

Forty-seven percent of the few eighth graders who submitted informative papers and received low ratings on their informative assessment writing also received low ratings on their informative portfolio writing, while 52 percent of these students received medium portfolio ratings and 2 percent high ratings. Only 13 percent received high scores on their informative assessment writing and submitted informative portfolio papers. Of these students, only some (14 percent) also received high scores on their portfolio writing. Twenty percent received low scores and 65 percent received medium scores.

A Pearson r correlation was also calculated as a way of measuring the degree of correlation between eighth graders' performance on their assessment writing and their portfolio writing. The correlation for eighth-grade narrative writing was .09 and for informative writing it was .15. Both of these correlations are very low.[26]

[26] A test for statistical significance was conducted for these correlations and neither correlation was significantly different from 0.

Table 6.5

Comparisons of Best Informative Portfolio Scores and Best Informative NAEP Assessment Scores, Grade 8

	BEST INFORMATIVE PORTFOLIO SCORES*			
	Overall	Low 1,2	Medium 3,4	High 5,6
Best Informative Assessment Scores				
Low (1,2)	**9 (1.2)** **N = 60**	47 (6.4) N = 28	52 (6.7) N = 31	2 (1.4) N = 1
Medium (3,4)	**79 (1.8)** **N = 551**	30 (1.9) N = 167	61 (2.0) N = 337	8 (1.4) N = 46
High (5,6)	**13 (1.2)** **N = 87**	20 (3.8) N = 18	65 (5.4) N = 57	14 (4.1) N = 12

The standard errors of the estimated percentages appear in parentheses. It can be said with 95 percent confidence for each population of interest that the value for the whole population is within plus or minus two standard errors of the estimate for the sample. In comparing two estimates, one must use the standard error of the difference (see Procedural Appendix for details). Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding error.

* Low informative papers were rated as Listings or Attempted Discussions; Medium informative papers were rated as Undeveloped Discussions or Discussions; and High informative papers were rated as Developed Discussions or Elaborated Discussions.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

Summary

The comparison of fourth graders' best narrative portfolio writing with their best narrative NAEP assessment writing revealed that the majority of students who received low scores on their assessment writing also received low scores on their portfolio writing. Likewise, the majority of students who received medium scores on their assessment writing also received medium scores on their portfolio papers.

However, for informative writing, while the majority of fourth graders who received low scores for their assessment writing also had low ratings on their portfolio papers, the majority who received medium ratings on their informative assessment writing received low scores on their informative portfolio papers. Among the few students who received high ratings on their assessment writing, over 50 percent received low ratings and 40 percent received medium ratings on their portfolio scores.

The pattern for eighth-grade narrative writing is different from that of fourth-grade. While the majority of students who received medium scores on their assessment writing received medium scores on their portfolio papers, the majority of students who received low scores and the majority who received high scores on their NAEP assessment also received medium ratings on their portfolio papers.

For eighth-grade informative writing, the majority of the students who received low scores on their assessment papers received medium scores on their portfolio submissions. Also, the majority of students who had high scores on their assessment writing received medium scores on their portfolio papers. However, the majority of students who scored at the medium level on their NAEP assessment also received medium scores on their portfolio writing. In general, the correlation between students' portfolio and assessment writing was low.

In conclusion, both ways of assessing students' writing have advantages and limitations. More traditional forms of direct writing assessment, such as the NAEP writing assessment, employ a common writing task and a time limit. This yields a standard means for comparing students' performance. However, these assessments are hampered by the limited time available to students to write and revise their work; the lack of resources available; and the lack of time for peer and/or teacher conferencing. Traditional types of assessment yield a snapshot of students' abilities to write unaided, first-draft papers on an assigned topic, rather than an in-depth view of students' writing processes.

In contrast, portfolio assessment systems, like the one employed by NAEP, provide rich information about the processes in which students engage. However, they are hampered by the quality of the classroom activities students are responding to and by the amount of writing students have to choose from when making their portfolio selections. Some students who participated in the NAEP portfolio study wrote in their letters that they had only one good piece to submit, so they submitted less than stellar papers in other genres in order to comply with our request for three papers.

Assessing students' writing abilities is a complex endeavor. Traditional forms of writing assessment, when combined with portfolio assessment projects, yield valuable and complementary information about the range of students' writing performance. More traditional forms of assessment provide a breadth of information about students' abilities to perform a range of writing tasks, while portfolio assessment provides in-depth information about the writing processes in which students engaged. The use of both portfolio and traditional modes of assessment in concert provides educators with rich, detailed portraits of students' writing abilities.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Summary of State Writing Assessment Programs

ALABAMA
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Alabama is assessing writing performance in grades 5 and 7 using descriptive, narrative, and expository modes (with the addition of the persuasive mode in grade 7). They have developed a "utilization guide" describing how to use the results of these assessments. They have also developed an integrated reading and writing assessment using "real life" situations at grade 2 statewide. Integrated reading and writing performance assessments at grades 5 and 7 may be developed in the future.

ALASKA

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Alaska State Department of Education
801 West Tenth Street
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Juneau, AK 99801-1894

Alaska has just completed a four-year pilot project in portfolio assessment supported by grants at the local level. Reports on this project are available to other states. As a result, one elementary school district requires language arts portfolios in grades 1 and 2. This district has produced an elementary portfolio handbook which is being marketed nationally. The use of student-led conferences also has been part of these pilot efforts. The state has developed statewide student performance standards which are in the final stage of board approval. These standards have initiated discussion on statewide portfolio assessment for district use.

ARIZONA

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Arizona Education Services Department
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Phoenix, AZ 85007

Arizona conducts a statewide writing assessment in grades 3, 8, and 12 in which 130,000 students are involved. It is part of a statewide process of program evaluation. Local districts use it to evaluate themselves. The assessment was developed by an outside contractor, Riverside. It is a thematic assessment, beginning with a reading activity that expands into a math activity and is then tied to writing. The writing question is genre-specific. There is a pre-writing activity, a rough draft and a final draft. A four-point rubric is used to evaluate mechanics and content. Portfolio assessment is not employed on the state level, but is used extensively locally.

ARKANSAS

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Little Rock, AR 72201-1071

Recently, a writing assessment field test was conducted of fifth, ninth and eleventh graders. Students were given one hour to write to a specific

prompt. Content, style, sentence formation, usage, and mechanics each were scored on a four-point scale. Arkansas teachers were specifically trained to administer this test. The assessment is used to improve and influence writing in the curriculum in all content areas.

Although pleased with the current writing assessment, Arkansas is considering changes in the future which would involve writing developed over time, the use of process writing, or a portfolio.

CALIFORNIA

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California is in the second year of administering the newly mandated California Learning Assessment System(CLAS). The purpose of CLAS is to assess student performance and to designate specific standards which will help students improve their performance. Under CLAS, the writing assessment will be administered in grades 4, 8, and 10. Students respond to different types of writing tasks at each grade level. School-level scores are reported at all grade levels; in 1994 individual scores will be reported at grade 8 only.

The development of a portfolio assessment for all three grade levels is in the pilot stage.

COLORADO

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Colorado is in a transitional stage due to recently enacted state legislation which mandates standards in six subject areas, including writing. The current program involves a triennial assessment of grades 4, 8, and 10 in descriptive and persuasive writing tasks. Student performance is scored on a primary and secondary trait four-point scale by an independent contractor. Participation in the assessment is by random selection of schools. Non-selected schools may choose to participate by paying essential costs.

The function of the assessment is to report on student achievement to the legislature and the public. Individual school districts may also use the results diagnostically.

CONNECTICUT

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Hartford, CT 06145

Each year, as part of the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT), the grade 4, 6, and 8 students produce a writing response. The students are allotted 45 minutes for a response which is then scored holistically. The entire CMT has recently undergone an extensive review process which resulted in clearer prompts and guidelines for students. The scoring scale was also changed from four points to six points. Scorers are trained according to anchor/training sets developed by Connecticut educators. Each paper is scored twice and the scores are added for a total student score from 2 to 12. Results are given on an individual student basis, aggregated up through state level data. Connecticut State Department content consultants advocate portfolios for all students, but the state does not do a large-scale assessment of such.

DELAWARE

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An interim assessment program is under way for all students in grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 in reading, writing, and math. There are 7,000 - 8,000 students per grade level.

This assessment is part of an accountability program in which schools will be held accountable, not students. Students will provide three writing samples. There will be two 60-minute stand-alone exercises with standard prompts for different types of writing. The third writing opportunity will be an open-ended question as part of the reading assessment.

FLORIDA

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Florida Education Department
The Capitol PL-08
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Florida is in the developmental stage of a school-level accountability program and anticipates the increased use of alternative assessment strategies at school and state levels.

GEORGIA

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Writing assessment is conducted in grades 3, 5, 8, and 11. The writing assessment was developed by groups of classroom teachers. In grade 3, the assessment is a "portfolio" type, in that the teachers select multiple samples of the student's work and assesses them according to the guidelines. An individual report is given to the parent, while the state receives a breakdown of the number of students at each developmental stage.

Grades 5, 8, and 11 receive a prompt during a 90-minute instructional period in which 45 minutes are allocated for writing. These writing samples are scored by Test Scoring and Reporting Services of the University of Georgia. Trained raters use a developmental stages scoring guide. Reporting is on an individual, school, and system level. For eleventh graders (65,000 students), this is a "high stakes" test which must be passed to meet graduation requirements.

HAWAII

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Honolulu, HI 96804

For the past 5 to 7 years, Hawaii has employed the Stanford Writing Assessment. It is now in the process of developing its own writing assessment instrument with the assistance of Dr. Eva Baker and the University of Hawaii. The pilot assessment, which is currently under way, involves 2,500 students in grades 3, 6, 8, and 10. The purpose of the assessment will be to inform instruction and improve curriculum.

IDAHO

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Idaho is field testing a fourth-grade writing performance assessment but has no plans to develop a portfolio assessment framework at this time.

ILLINOIS

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Illinois encouraged optional use of portfolio assessment at the local level as a part of its school accreditation process. This is a feature of complex generated responses framework developed in 1992. Schools are required to use a variety of assessments as a part of their local school improvement plan.

INDIANA

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Center for School Improvement and Performance
Room 229, State House
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Indiana is using portfolios as part of a larger performance-based assessment system. Standardized assessment of writing is accomplished through prompted writing scored by rubrics on the state assessments at five grade levels. Portfolios are included as a recommended classroom assessment strategy. Teachers are learning to use students' work as a data source for profiling learning across time and to support students in becoming more articulate about their own learning.

IOWA

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There is no statewide writing assessment in Iowa. Nonetheless, 60-70 percent of all school districts conduct a voluntary writing assessment on their own. Outside consultants and State Department of Education personnel are utilized when requested. Since 1978, 5,000 - 6,000 teachers have participated in the Iowa Writing Project, and more than 5800 students participated in the New Standards Writing, Reading and Mathematics Task Performance Assessments this past year. In the 1994-95 school year, 128 teachers will participate in the Portfolio Field Trial Assessment.

KANSAS

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Topeka, KS 66612

The Kansas writing assessment consists of a single writing sample gathered from grades 5, 8, and 10 comprising 30,000 students per grade level. The state provides the prompt, although the local school may use their own. Students may also provide a writing sample from their portfolios, providing it meets four criteria: it was written in school; there was no extraordinary teacher intervention; there was an opportunity to revise; and the piece is not fiction, dramatic script or poetry.

The writing sample is scored first on the local level according to a six-trait analytical model. A second reading is done by teachers over the summer at the Center for Educational Testing at the University of Kansas. The state and school districts use the writing assessment to gather information about instruction.

KENTUCKY

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Frankfort, KY 40601

Kentucky has in place for grades 4, 8, and 12, a writing portfolio assessment that involves the holistic evaluation of students' work by teachers. The six entries, chosen by the students from completed writings in all subject areas, include different types of writing composed for various purposes and audiences. At each grade level, content requirements include a personal narrative, a piece of fiction, and pieces that address a variety of purposes such as defending a position, explaining a process, and analyzing or evaluating a situation. In the assessment students are recognized as the sole creators, authors, and owners of their work. Teachers serve as coaches and mentors. Parents, friends, and other students assume roles of listeners, responders, and encouragers.

LOUISIANA

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In Louisiana, the Graduation Exit Examination measures grade-appropriate proficiencies in English, language arts, mathematics, written composition, science, and social studies. The written composition test measures the students' competence to synthesize other language skills measured on the Graduation Exit Examination. It also measures student ability in organizing ideas and in responding appropriately to purpose and audience through the designated mode of writing. The State of Louisiana gives careful instructional attention to the writing process. The instructional program addresses four stages of writing: prewriting, draft writing, revising, and final writing. The written composition test supports this instructional model by duplicating the same process in its direct writing assessment.

MAINE

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Maine has completed a pilot portfolio assessment program in grades 4, 8, and 11. A report on this project is available to other states. The results of this assessment are reported as proficiency levels rather than scale scores.

MARYLAND

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Maryland completed a pilot of an interdisciplinary portfolio for high school level and is considering implementing a high school assessment framework that would integrate content-area knowledge and skills and cross content-area skills (eg. problem solving) into portfolios. Maryland assesses writing across content areas in grades 3, 5, and 8 and requires students to pass a two-essay (narrative and explanatory domains) minimum competency test to receive a high school diploma.

MASSACHUSETTS

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Writing is currently assessed by the Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program. All students in grades 4, 8, and 10 are asked to complete one open-ended question in math, reading, science and social studies. Approximately one-third of the questions are scored for quality of communication (writing) in addition to content knowledge.

The recently enacted Education Reform Act will result in a new testing program. No decision has been made as to the form writing assessment will take. The use of portfolios is being considered.

MICHIGAN

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Michigan is in the process of creating a statewide writing assessment. The pilot is scheduled for November 1994 with full operation planned for the fall of 1995. All students in grades 5, 8, and 11 will be tested which encompasses over 100,000 students at each grade level. Development of the eleventh-grade test was by the Michigan Council of Teachers of English. A.C.T. is the test development contractor.

The fifth- and eighth-grade assessments occur over a three-day period with 45 minutes allotted for writing each day. One extended piece of writing is developed. On the first day, there is a writing prompt, small group discussion and writing. Eighth graders will receive brief items to view or read as part of their writing stimulus. Day two consists of writing and further discussion, with revision, editing, and final draft occurring on day three. The assessments will be scored by Michigan teachers.

The eleventh graders must pass a writing (three-strand) assessment to earn a state endorsement on their high school diploma. Strand one is called "Portfolio Pieces" and consists of two pieces of student selected writing, one of which must have been developed in a class other than English. These pieces are counted, but not scored. The second strand is called "Reporting and Reflecting." Students are given a specific prompt and 35 minutes to write about the pieces they have brought with them. Strand three occurs

over two days. On the first day, the students will be given brief items to view or read, a prompt and then 20 minutes for a "quick write," followed by a 10-minute group discussion. On the second day, the student will be given a prompt and 115 minutes to develop an extended piece of writing linked thematically to day one using pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing. Three pieces of writing will be scored, the first two as first-draft writing, the final extended piece as polished, edited writing.

MINNESOTA

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Grades 6, 9, and 11 participate in an assessment that reflects the writing process. The assessment occurs over a three-day period. On day one, a short writing survey is administered, followed by the presentation of the topic, a single prompt, and pre-writing. On day two, a first draft is prepared which is edited, re-written, and finalized on day three.

The assessment was developed within the state by language arts professionals, K-12 staff, and the State Department of Education. Scoring is on a 6-point scale and is done by teachers who are hired and trained by the state. The assessment is used on the district level for local program and curriculum evaluation.

MISSISSIPPI

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In grade 11, Mississippi administers the Functional Literacy Examination which has a direct writing assessment component. Since passage is required for graduation, the examination is given in the spring with two opportunities to retake.

Beginning in 1994, a new norm-referenced integrated language arts and mathematics assessment will be given in grades 4 - 9. This assessment combines performance items with multiple choice questions. Given in October, it will serve a diagnostic function, and it will be a part of state accreditation.

MISSOURI

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Missouri is conducting a writing sample in grades 4, 8, and 11 on a yearly basis. Approximately 10 percent of the students in those grades are sampled, and the assessments are scored regionally across the state. Assessment takes three days for the student to complete. Missouri is experimenting with portfolio assessments at this time and plans to make use of them in some fashion within the next few years.

MONTANA

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There is no statewide writing assessment in Montana. However, a number of local districts have developed their own writing assessment programs. State accreditation standards require districts to assess appropriately their locally developed learner goals. The program standard for communication arts states that instructional programs must teach process and focus on the communication of ideas. Many districts, therefore, utilize a single prompt or portfolio writing assessment to meet these standards.

NEBRASKA

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Nebraska does not conduct a statewide writing assessment. Local school districts primarily utilize standardized testing and teacher evaluation to assess writing proficiency. There is some interest in portfolio assessment on the local level and Educational Service Units are currently conducting in-service programs in this area.

NEVADA

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Nevada conducts a direct writing assessment in grades 8 and 11. The eighth-grade assessment is scored on a 5-point analytical trait scale. The analytical traits are: ideas/content, organization, voice, and conventions. Students write on one topic in two writing sessions on two consecutive days in an attempt to duplicate the writing process. Passage of the eleventh-grade assessment is required for graduation. Students write on two topics which are holistically scored on a 6-point scale by two scorers. Nevada has employed direct writing assessment since 1978 and uses a pool of readers throughout the state, primarily English teachers.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

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New Hampshire is developing its own assessment program. In May 1994, all third graders (16,000 students) were assessed in an on-demand writing task. By May 1996, students in grades 3, 6, and 10 will respond to on-demand writing tasks. Consideration is being given to having the 1995 pilot for grades 6 and 10 include an open-ended editing task to get a better handle on mechanics and process writing. Test development has been done by Advanced Systems in Measurement and Evaluation, Dover, New Hampshire. Test results, reported by students on core items and by district, are intended to encourage and improve curriculum development. Although portfolio assessment is not employed on the state level, local school districts are encouraged to build on the statewide assessment.

NEW JERSEY

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New Jersey administers two assessments in writing to all students in grades 8 and 11. Passage of the grade 11 test is a requirement for high school

graduation. The grade 8 test serves as an early warning. Both tests are part multiple-choice (editing other fictitious students' work) and part essay. The grade 8 test contains a 40-minute essay while the grade 11 essay is 60 minutes in length. New Jersey has also initiated the development of performance assessments for use by local districts to assess student proficiency in core courses. We are seeking information about portfolio assessment.

NEW MEXICO

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Beginning in 1991-92, the department designed and utilized the Portfolio Writing Assessment Program. Early in the school year, teachers are provided with common prompts and a guide that assists students in understanding the criteria for good writing. The teacher provides lessons for the class and the student writes about the assigned topic until both the teacher and student are satisfied that the students' piece of writing demonstrates his or her best efforts. This is repeated with each prompt. Pre-writing activities and drafts are stored in the students' portfolios for review and reflection. In the spring, the prompt selected for scoring is announced by the department. The teacher and student then work together to select the best piece of writing for transcribing onto a booklet. The student's writing is then scored against a set of criteria.

NEW YORK

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In New York State, there are three writing assessments: the grade 5 Pupil Evaluation Program (PEP) writing test, the grade 8/9 preliminary competency test (PCT) and the grade 11/12 Regents competency test (RCT). The tests are developed by the State Education Department with the assistance of classroom teachers. Each assessment is a direct measure of a student's ability to communicate in writing. Tasks are geared to grade level

and student responses are relatively brief, ranging from 100-200 words. Students are given the opportunity to follow the process writing approach.

The method of rating student responses for the writing tests is holistic. The PEP writing test employs two raters for each of two student responses, whereas the PCT and RCT employ a different rater for each of three writing responses, averaging the three ratings to achieve a final score. RCT papers receiving a final score of 60 and above are forwarded to the state for analysis, with a summary of test results returned to school administrators. The PEP and PCT provide early identification of students who need special help in developing the basic skills in writing. Students must pass the RCT in writing or the Regents comprehensive examination in English in order to receive a local high school diploma.

In addition to the writing assessments that are part of the Regents Competency Testing Program, the New York State's Regents Examination Program assesses writing in its Regents comprehensive examination in English. As part of this assessment, students are required to write an essay of approximately 250 words based on one of two assigned literature essay items. Topics in the essay item may be related to plot, setting, characters, theme and/or literary devices. Students are also required to write a composition of approximately 250 words. Students select one of two "situations" that present a purpose for the piece of writing and the specific audience or they choose one of six assigned topics. The topics allow students to determine their own purpose and audience for their writing. They cover areas such as science, the arts, sports, and current issues.

The method of rating student responses to both the literature essay and the composition for the Regents comprehensive examination in English is holistic. Specific criteria for rating the literature essay and composition responses are provided. Use of the committee method for rating these responses is strongly recommended as a way of improving the reliability of the ratings. The two writing tasks in the Regents comprehensive examination in English represent 55 percent of the total examination score.

NORTH CAROLINA

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North Carolina has been conducting statewide writing assessment and training workshops since 1983. State statutes in 1992 charged the schools to

promote curriculum referenced, state-developed tests, and performance measures to replace nationally normed tests. Assessment of writing occurs for every student in grades 4, 6, and 8 each year and all students in grades 3–8 also take ten open-ended items in reading, mathematics and social studies at the end of the year. English II students are asked to write two compositions each year. All writing is scored centrally using a holistic approach.

NORTH DAKOTA

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North Dakota is revising its English language arts framework. This will lead to some type of writing assessment in the future.

OHIO

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Writing assessment is conducted as part of the proficiency testing program at grades 9 and 12. In school year 1994-95, grade 4 will be added and grade 6 will begin the following year.

The writing assessment at grades 9 and 12 consists of two prompts and is holistically scored on four- and six-point rubrics respectively. The fourth- and sixth-grade assessments are still in development.

For ninth-grade students, the assessment in writing and other subject areas constitutes an exit exam and must be passed in order to graduate. The twelfth-grade assessment enables local school districts to evaluate their programs. The fourth- and sixth-grade assessments are seen as a means to identify students needing intervention.

OREGON

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Oregon conducts a statewide writing assessment of all students in grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 each year. This involves 30,000 - 40,000 students at each grade level. Students are given three 45-minute class periods to write. They are randomly assigned modes of writing (descriptive, narrative, expository, imaginative, or persuasive) and two choices of topic. Students are encouraged to use a process writing approach and any tools (thesaurus, dictionary, etc.) to assist them. The final essay is scored on six traits: ideas and content, organization, voice or style, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions (grammar and punctuation). Each element is rated on a 1–5 scale by two independent scorers with an additional holistic score given on the mode of writing. A third reading is used if there is a significant discrepancy in score.

Oregon classroom teachers are trained to score the test, which is given in February, scored in March and returned to students in April. This schedule is employed since feedback to the student is of prime importance. The writing assessment was developed more than a decade ago in a local school district with the assistance of the State Department of Education. Several states have made use of the Oregon model.

PENNSYLVANIA

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The Pennsylvania Writing Assessment is given to a representative sample of students in grades 6 and 9 annually. Holistic scores provide the basis for school, district and statewide data on the status of student writing. Since the statewide assessment is not intended to make decisions about individual students, districts are encouraged to develop writing portfolios that would include a series of writing samples over time.

State regulations require districts to develop a portfolio assessment system that would provide documentation of achievement of the 53 state-identified student learning outcomes, a part of which may be writing

samples. An audit of these portfolios could become part of the state assessment plan when all districts have portfolios in place.

RHODE ISLAND

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Rhode Island is developing a portfolio system for grades 1 through 6 that focuses on the integration of instruction and assessment in language arts and math. In the third year of its program, 125 teachers continue to be involved. These teachers return to their districts and teach others in the development and use of portfolio assessments.

SOUTH CAROLINA

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South Carolina's Basic Skills Assessment Program includes writing tests in Grades 6 and 8 and at the exit examination level. The students are given prompts on which to write their untimed compositions. The students are provided paper to develop first drafts of their compositions. The final drafts are written in their answer folders and are scored independently by two readers using a 4-point modified holistic score scale. Third readers score papers when the first two readers do not agree. All papers that do not meet the minimum standard of 3 on the 4-point scale are scored analytically to provide information to schools for remedial purposes.

SOUTH DAKOTA

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South Dakota has no plans to develop a portfolio assessment framework at this time.

TENNESSEE

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October 1994 will mark the first state-funded administration of the TCAP Writing Assessment. Students in grades 4, 8, and 11 will be assessed each October. The target modes will be descriptive for grade 4, expository for grade 8, and persuasive for grade 11. A six-point focused holistic scale will be used. The Tennessee Department of Education will contract for scoring. Results of the assessment will be for diagnostic purposes. The criteria for scoring grade 11 essays is the same as the Tennessee Board of Regents uses for placement into remedial, developmental, or college-level courses.

TEXAS

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Texas is in its fifteenth year of statewide performance assessment of writing. Students at grades 4, 8, and exit level receive a holistic score of a composition written on a prescribed topic and for a prescribed purpose. Each student performing below minimum expectations is given an analytic summary of his or her performance indicating possible remediation strategies. Presently there is no timetable to employ statewide portfolio assessment.

UTAH

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Utah initiated the development of performance assessment exercises in 1992.

VERMONT

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Vermont has portfolio pilot project reports, including samples of student work, available to other states. Portfolio assessment took place in grades 4 and 8. Portfolio materials were selected by students. Refinement of scoring procedures and training of scorers at the state level continues to take place.

VIRGINIA

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Virginia administers a legislatively-mandated Literacy Passport Test in reading, writing, and mathematics in grade 6. Students who do not pass all three components of the LPT as well as students who transfer into the Virginia public schools take the test in grades 7-11. This test must be passed in order to be fully classified as a high school student. Passing the Literacy Passport Test is also a requirement for a standard high school diploma beginning with the class of 1996.

The writing assessment component of this test is a prompted, on-demand writing task. The first-draft essay is evaluated in five domains: composing, style, sentence formation, usage, and mechanics. A 4-point scale is used in each domain. The assessment was developed by the Virginia Department of Education in conjunction with an outside contractor. The tasks are also scored by an outside contractor. A fourth-grade assessment is given on a voluntary basis by local districts to help identify those students who are at risk and may need early intervention to pass the Literacy Passport Test.

WASHINGTON

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At present, writing assessment is not done on a regular basis in Washington, only a periodic sampling of student work is evaluated. This is due to change within the next two years.

The Commission on Student Learning is currently developing a statement of essential required learning for students. This will determine standards for curriculum and a specific framework for assessment. Eight or nine areas of learning are to be covered, including writing. Implementation of writing and three other areas is scheduled for the 1996-97 school year.

WEST VIRGINIA

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West Virginia currently has in place a Writing Assessment Program in grades 8 and 10. In 1994-95, a writing component will be added to a performance assessment already in place in grades 1 through 7. This performance test, WV-STEP (West Virginia Statewide Testing of Educational Progress), tests all students in grades 1 through 8 in the ares of mathematics and language arts. There are no plans to develop a portfolio assessment framework at this time.

WISCONSIN

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Wisconsin currently tests students at grades 8 and 10 with a two-prompt writing assessment. Students have thirty minutes for each of the two prompts, one of which is expressive and the other persuasive. The test is administered and scored by Psychological Corporation. They are currently developing an on-demand performance assessment in language arts, mathematics, and science. The contractor is Wisconsin Center for Education Research at the University of Wisconsin. The center uses Wisconsin teachers

as writers, field testers, and scorers. Although writing is a feature of each of these assessments, in language arts it plays a major role. The language arts instruments represent week-long "curricular events" in which the student reads, views, speaks, listens, and writes. The entire instrument is scored for student's ability to make meaning by using language. A second score is given on the center piece, a written product evaluated for substance, development, coherence, conventions, and style. The performance assessments are one of three indicators in the Wisconsin Student Assessment System scheduled to be in place in 1996-97. The other components are a criterion-referenced, limited-response knowledge and concepts test and a locally controlled portfolio.

WYOMING

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There is no statewide writing assessment in Wyoming. Local districts are encouraged to develop writing assessment programs to meet local needs. Many that have are using the Direct Writing Assessment six-trait model. The state legislature has mandated district accountability, but has not funded it. It is unlikely that districts will support any program that encourages comparing district performances.

Appendix B

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Appendix C

Procedural Appendix

Introduction

This appendix provides further information about the methods and procedures used in NAEP's 1992 writing portfolio study. The *NAEP 1992 Technical Report* provides more extensive information about procedures.

NAEP's Writing Assessment Framework

Developed by a committee of writing researchers, teachers, curriculum specialists, and business representatives, under the direction of the National Assessment Governing Board, the *Writing Framework for the 1992 National Assessment of Educational Progress* builds upon two decades of NAEP experience in large-scale direct writing assessment.[27] The *1992 Writing Framework* includes six major objectives.

[27] *Writing Framework for the 1992 National Assessment of Educational Progress* (Washington, DC: National Assessment Governing Board, U.S. Department of Education).

Students should:

- write for a variety of purposes: informative, persuasive, and narrative
- write on a variety of tasks and for many different audiences
- write from a variety of stimulus materials and within different time constraints
- generate, draft, evaluate, revise, and edit ideas and forms of expression in their writing
- display effective choices in the organization of their writing, including detail to illustrate and elaborate their ideas and use of appropriate conventions of written English
- value writing as a communicative activity

In developing the framework, input was received from writing educators, policymakers, scholars, and major education organizations. Care was taken to incorporate important changes from past assessments that reflected findings and recommendations from recent research on writing instruction and assessment, as well as the experience of many state writing programs. Therefore, highlights of the 1992 writing assessment include: assessment of informative, persuasive, and narrative writing; a set of writing topics that incorporates a variety of stimulus materials, audiences, and forms of writing; expanded assessment time (25 minutes per prompt at grades 4, 8, and 12, with some eighth and twelfth graders receiving a 50-minute task); a special page accompanying each topic for students to plan and organize their writing; enhanced six-point primary-trait scoring criteria; and a special writing portfolio study at grades 4 and 8.

The Assessment Design

Design and development of the 1992 writing assessment was managed by Educational Testing Service, whose staff worked with the 1992 Writing Task Development Committee composed of distinguished experts in writing education and assessment. To ensure continuity with the 1992 NAEP Writing Framework, the 10-member Development Committee included consultants who had worked on the Framework Committee.

For the main 1992 writing assessment, each student received an assessment booklet containing a set of general background questions, either

one or two writing tasks, a set of subject-specific background questions, and a set of questions about his or her motivation and familiarity with the assessment materials. Each writing task was a section, or block, of assessment time. Students were given either two 25-minute blocks or one 50-minute block, with the longer blocks used for some tasks assigned at grades 8 and 12.

The 1992 writing assessment also involved "The Nation's Writing Portfolio," a study of students' classroom-based writing, which was piloted in 1990.[28] For this portion of the assessment, a subsample of the fourth and eighth graders who participated in the timed portion of the assessment was asked to work with their teachers to complete questionnaires and submit three pieces of their best writing to NAEP for subsequent analysis. The 1992 portfolio component was expanded from the 1990 pilot effort to include: 1) a concerted effort to provide advance notice to teachers, 2) production of actual portfolio folders to collect students' written work, 3) student selection of their three best pieces for the portfolio rather than one, 4) student letters explaining their selections, and 5) teacher questionnaires about the instruction associated with each of the student papers.

The 1992 assessment was based on an adaptation of matrix sampling called balanced incomplete block (BIB) spiraling — a design that enabled coverage of the purposes for writing while minimizing the burden for any one student. The balanced incomplete block part of the design assigns the blocks of questions to booklets in a way that provides for position effect, complete balancing within each writing purpose, and partial balancing across writing purposes. The spiraling part of the method cycles the booklets for administration, so that typically only a few students in any assessment session receive the same booklet.

National Sampling and Data Collection

Sampling and data collection activities for the 1992 NAEP assessment were conducted by a well-trained field staff from Westat, Inc. In 1992, the assessment was conducted from January through March, with some make-up sessions in early April.

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[28] Gentile, C., *Exploring New Methods for Collecting Students' School-based Writing: NAEP's 1990 Portfolio Study* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992).

As with all NAEP national assessments, the results for the national samples were based on a stratified, three-stage sampling plan. The first stage included defining geographic primary sampling units (PSUs), which are typically groups of contiguous counties, but sometimes a single county; classifying the PSUs into strata defined by region and community type; and then randomly selecting PSUs. For each grade, the second stage included listing, classifying, and randomly selecting schools, both public and private, within each PSU selected at the first stage. The third stage involved randomly selecting students within a school for participation. Some students who were selected (about 7 to 8 percent) were excluded because of limited English proficiency or severe disability.

LEP and IEP Students

It is NAEP's intent to assess all selected students. Therefore, all selected students who are capable of participating in the assessment should be assessed. However, some students sampled for participation in NAEP can be excused from the sample according to carefully defined criteria. Specifically, some of the students identified as having Limited English Proficiency (LEP) or having an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) may be incapable of participating meaningfully in the assessment. These students are identified as follows:

LEP students may be excluded if:

- The student is a native speaker of a language other than English; AND
- He or she has been enrolled in an English-speaking school for less than two years; AND
- The student is judged to be incapable of taking part in the assessment.

IEP students may be excluded if:

- The student is mainstreamed less than 50 percent of the time in academic subjects and is judged to be incapable of taking part in the assessment, OR
- The IEP team has determined that the student is incapable of taking part meaningfully in the assessment.

When there is doubt, the student is included in the assessment. For each student excused from the assessment, school personnel complete a questionnaire about the characteristics of that student and the reason for exclusion. Although these data, like all NAEP information, do not identify individuals, they do permit profiles of the excluded students as a group. Approximately 7 to 8 percent of the students nationally were excluded from the assessment.

Data Analysis and Weighting

After the assessment information had been compiled in the database, the data were weighted according to the population structure. The weighting for the national sample reflected the probability of selection for each student as a result of the sampling design, adjusted for nonresponse. Through poststratification, the weighting assured that the representation of certain subpopulations corresponded to figures from the U.S. Census and the Current Population Survey.[29]

NAEP Reporting Groups

This report contains results for groups of students within the nation defined by certain demographic characteristics. The definitions for subgroups, used in all NAEP assessments, as defined by gender, race/ethnicity, parents' education level, geographic region, and type of community follows.

Gender. Results are reported separately for males and females. Gender was reported by the student.

Race/Ethnicity. Results are presented for students of different racial/ethnic groups according to the following mutually exclusive categories: White, Black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian (including Alaskan Native). Some racial/ethnic results are not reported

[29] For additional information about the use of weighing procedures in NAEP, see Johnson, E. G., "Considerations and Techniques for the Analysis of NAEP Data," *Journal of Educational Statistics* (December 1989).

separately because there were too few students in the classification. However, the data for all students, regardless of whether their racial/ethnic group was reported separately, were included in computing the overall results.

Parents' Education Level. Students were asked to indicate the extent of schooling for each of their parents — did not finish high school, graduated from high school, had some education after high school, or graduated from college. The response indicating the highest level of education for either parent was selected for reporting.

Geographic Region. The United States has been divided into four regions: Northeast, Southeast, Central, and West.

Type of Community. Results are provided for three mutually exclusive community types — advantaged urban, disadvantaged urban, and extreme rural — areas that typically reveal differences in students' performance. The definitions of these areas follows.

> *Advantaged Urban:* Students in this group reside in metropolitan statistical areas and attend schools where a high proportion of the students' parents are in professional or managerial positions.
>
> *Disadvantaged Urban:* Students in this group reside in metropolitan statistical areas and attend schools where a high proportion of the students' parents are on welfare or are not regularly employed.
>
> *Extreme Rural:* Students in this group do not reside in metropolitan statistical areas. They attend schools in areas with a population below 10,000 where many of the students' parents are farmers or farm workers.

Tables C.1 and C.2 present information about the percentages of students who particpated in the main writing assessment and the portfolio subsample according to the NAEP reporting groups.

Table C.1

Percentages of Fourth Graders Participating in Main Writing Assessment and Portfolio Study*

	Students in Main Writing Assessment	Students in Portfolio Study	Students Submitting Narrative Papers	Students Submitting Informative Papers
Gender				
Male	49 (0.5)	48 (1.7)	47 (2.1)	48 (1.8)
Female	51 (0.5)	52 (1.7)	53 (2.1)	52 (1.8)
Race/Ethnicity				
White	70 (0.2)	72 (0.9)	74 (1.4)	71 (1.1)
Black	16 (0.1)	14 (0.8)	13 (1.2)	15 (0.9)
Hispanic	9 (0.2)	9 (0.6)	9 (0.8)	9 (0.7)
Other	4 (0.2)	4 (0.4)	4 (0.4)	4 (0.5)
Parents' Level of Education				
College	41 (1.0)	39 (1.7)	39 (1.9)	42 (2.1)
Some Ed. after H.S.	9 (0.4)	10 (1.0)	9 (1.0)	10 (1.1)
H.S. Grad	14 (0.5)	13 (1.0)	14 (1.2)	13 (1.1)
Less than H.S.	4 (0.3)	4 (0.7)	4 (0.7)	4 (0.7)
Unknown	32 (0.8)	34 (1.4)	33 (1.6)	33 (1.6)
Geographic Regions				
Northeast	21 (0.8)	22 (1.1)	23 (1.2)	23 (1.6)
Southeast	23 (0.7)	24 (0.8)	24 (1.1)	24 (1.0)
Central	28 (0.6)	28 (0.7)	28 (1.1)	28 (1.3)
West	28 (0.7)	26 (1.0)	26 (1.6)	25 (1.4)
Type of Community				
Advantaged Urban	11 (1.7)	12 (1.9)	13 (2.3)	12 (2.0)
Disadvantaged Urban	8 (1.1)	7 (1.0)	6 (1.0)	8 (1.1)
Extreme Rural	10 (2.2)	11 (2.4)	12 (2.8)	11 (2.2)
Other	70 (2.9)	70 (3.1)	68 (2.8)	69 (3.2)
Type of School				
Public	87 (1.2)	87 (1.1)	87 (1.5)	87 (1.2)
Private	12 (1.0)	13 (1.1)	13 (1.2)	13 (1.1)

*Due to rounding, percentages may not equal 100.

Table C.2

Percentages of Eighth Graders Participating in Main Writing Assessment and Portfolio Study*

	Students in Main Writing Assessment	Students in Portfolio Study	Students Submitting Narrative Papers	Students Submitting Informative Papers
Gender				
Male	50 (0.5)	51 (1.6)	50 (2.0)	52 (1.6)
Female	50 (0.5)	49 (1.6)	50 (2.00)	48 (1.6)
Race/Ethnicity				
White	70 (0.2)	73 (1.2)	76 (1.3)	72 (1.3)
Black	16 (0.1)	14 (0.9)	12 (0.9)	15 (1.1)
Hispanic	10 (0.2)	9 (0.7)	8 (0.9)	9 (0.8)
Other	4 (0.2)	4 (0.4)	4 (0.5)	4 (0.6)
Parents' Level of Education				
College	40 (1.1)	42 (1.7)	42 (2.0)	41 (2.0)
Some Ed. after H.S.	20 (0.6)	20 (1.4)	21 (1.9)	21 (1.6)
H.S. Grad	25 (0.8)	25 (1.1)	25 (1.5)	25 (1.4)
Less than H.S.	8 (0.4)	6 (0.9)	5 (1.1)	6 (1.1)
Unknown	8 (0.4)	7 (0.8)	7 (1.0)	7 (0.8)
Geographic Regions				
Northeast	22 (0.7)	22 (1.9)	21 (1.7)	23 (2.2)
Southeast	25 (0.5)	27 (1.2)	28 (1.7)	27 (1.7)
Central	25 (0.5)	24 (1.3)	23 (1.6)	24 (1.7)
West	28 (0.5)	27 (1.1)	28 (2.1)	25 (1.5)
Type of Community				
Advantaged Urban	9 (1.6)	9 (1.5)	9 (1.4)	8 (1.6)
Disadvantaged Urban	10 (1.4)	9 (1.2)	8 (1.2)	9 (1.3)
Extreme Rural	9 (2.4)	10 (2.8)	10 (2.3)	10 (3.2)
Other	72 (3.0)	73 (3.1)	74 (3.2)	73 (3.8)
Type of School				
Public	89 (0.9)	88 (1.0)	88 (0.9)	87 (1.2)
Private	11 (0.9)	13 (0.8)	12 (0.9)	13 (0.8)

*Due to rounding, percentages may not equal 100.

Estimating Variability

Because the statistics presented in this report are estimates of group and subgroup performance based on samples of students, rather than the values that could be calculated if every student in the nation answered every question, it is important to have measures of the degree of uncertainty

of the estimates. The variability of estimates of percentages of students having certain background characteristics or answering a certain cognitive question correctly is accounted for by the uncertainty due to sampling only a relatively small number of students.

In addition to providing estimates of percentages of students, this report also provides information about the uncertainty of each statistic. Because NAEP uses complex sampling procedures, conventional formulas for estimating sampling variability that assume simple random sampling are inappropriate, so NAEP uses a jackknife replication procedure to estimate standard errors. The jackknife standard error provides a reasonable measure of uncertainty for any information about students that cannot be observed without error.[30] The jackknife method of estimating variances will correctly estimate variances as long as the data are independent at the Primary Sampling Unit level. In the population of papers, any correlations between papers of the same person are all taken into account by the jackknife technique.

The reader is reminded that, like those from all surveys, NAEP results are also subject to other kinds of errors including the effects of necessarily imperfect adjustment for student and school nonresponse and other largely unknowable effects associated with the particular instrumentation and data collection methods used. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to a number of sources: inability to obtain complete information about all selected students in all selected schools in the sample (some students or schools refused to participate, or students participated but answered only certain items); ambiguous definitions; differences in interpreting questions; inability or unwillingness to give correct information; mistakes in recording, coding, or scoring data; and other errors of collecting, processing, sampling, and estimating missing data. The extent of nonsampling errors is difficult to estimate. By their nature, the impacts of such error cannot be reflected in the data-based estimates of uncertainty provided in NAEP reports.

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[30] For further details, see Johnson, E. G., "Considerations and Techniques for the Analysis of NAEP Data," *Journal of Educational Statistics* (Winter 1989).

Drawing Inferences from the Results

The use of *confidence intervals*, based on the standard errors, provides a way to make inferences about the population means and percentages in a manner that reflects the uncertainty associated with the sample estimates. An estimated sample mean or percentage ± 2 standard errors represents a 95 percent confidence interval for the corresponding population quantity. This means that with approximately 95 percent certainty, the average performance of the entire population of interest is within ± 2 standard errors of the sample mean or percentage.

Confidence intervals can be constructed for percentages, provided that the percentages are not extremely large (greater than 90) or extremely small (less than 10). For extreme percentages, confidence intervals may not be appropriate. However, procedures for obtaining accurate confidence intervals are quite complicated. Thus, comparisons involving extreme percentages should be interpreted with this in mind.

To determine whether there is a real difference between the mean or percentage (or proportion of a certain attribute) for two groups in the population, one needs to obtain an estimate of the degree of uncertainty associated with the difference between the percentages, means, or proportions of these groups for the sample. This estimate of the degree of uncertainty — called the standard error of the difference between the groups — is obtained by taking the square of each group's standard error, summing these squared standard errors, and then taking the square root of this sum.

Similar to the manner in which the standard error for an individual group mean or proportion is used, the standard error of the difference can be used to help determine whether differences between groups in the population are real. The difference between the mean percentage or proportion of the two groups ± 2 standard errors of the difference represents an approximate 95 percent confidence interval. If the resulting interval includes zero, there is insufficient evidence to claim a real difference between groups in the population. If the interval does not contain zero, the difference between groups is statistically significant (different) at the .05 level.

The procedures described in this section, and the certainty ascribed to intervals (e.g., a 95 percent confidence interval) are based on statistical theory that assumes that only one confidence interval or test of statistical significance is being performed. When one considers sets of confidence intervals, like those for the average percentages of different racial/ethnic

groups, statistical theory indicates that the certainty associated with the entire set of intervals is less than that attributable to each individual comparison from the set. If one wants to hold the certainty level for a specific set of comparisons at a particular level (e.g., .95), adjustments (called multiple-comparisons procedures) need to be made.

The standard errors for means and proportions reported by NAEP are statistics and subject to a certain degree of uncertainty. In certain cases, typically when the standard error is based on a small number of students or when the group of students is enrolled in a small number of schools, the amount of uncertainty associated with the standard errors may be quite large. Throughout this report, estimates of standard errors subject to a large degree of uncertainty are designated by the symbol "!". In such cases, the standard errors — and any confidence intervals or significance tests involving these standard errors — should be interpreted cautiously.

Evaluating Students' Portfolios

The national committee and NAEP staff who designed the NAEP portfolio study explored several approaches to evaluating students' portfolios. First, the committee considered assigning a common task in addition to collecting examples of students' regular classroom-based writing. Since the main NAEP writing assessment already contained a range of assigned tasks, the committee chose instead to focus on collecting multiple samples of students' classroom work.

Asking students to select three samples of their classroom-based writing opened the door to a wide range of possibilities. Student A's portfolio might contain three stories while student B might send in three informative pieces. Student C might include one persuasive letter while student D might submit three stories, two informative pieces, and one persuasive essay. The question then became how to compare the wide variety of portfolios submitted. Developing a means for evaluating such different portfolios in a way that would provide meaningful comparisons between students' performance was virtually impossible without more information about the students and their classroom experiences.

To this end, the committee and NAEP staff attempted to collect information from the participating students and teachers that would permit

a classification of students' classroom experiences. A teacher questionnaire was designed to collect consistent information from teachers about a variety of factors related to the students' submissions and the classroom writing activities. In order to collect additional information, students were asked to write a letter describing their submissions. However, the amount and quality of information actually provided by teachers and students varied greatly, making it difficult to develop adequate ways of classifying students' classroom experiences.

Without a consistent understanding of students' classroom experiences, the development of an overall evaluative rating for students' portfolios and a comparison of their performance was not possible. Instead, NAEP focused on what the portfolios could tell us about students' abilities to write the various types of pieces they submitted in their portfolios.

Because the majority of the writing submitted was informative and narrative, these domains were selected for evaluation. Although few students submitted persuasive pieces, their persuasive writing was also evaluated as a means of broadening the types of writing evaluated. Poetry, thank you letters, and skill sheets were not evaluated because they did not represent extensive pieces of writing and also because so few students included them in their portfolios. Thus, evaluative guides were developed for students' informative, narrative, and persuasive writing.

Developing Evaluative Guides

For its regular writing assessments, NAEP typically develops specific scoring guides for each of its writing prompts. The limitations of this approach for evaluating diverse samples of school-based writing are obvious. With more than 250 classrooms involved in this study, developing a scoring guide for each unique assignment would have been impossible. As part of its 1990 pilot study of students' classroom-based writing, NAEP developed scoring guides specific to each of the major domains: narrative, informative, and persuasive. A brief description of this process follows.

Using samples of the student writing, NAEP staff worked with a team of elementary teachers, secondary teachers, and teacher educators to develop scoring guides. The process the team of teachers used to develop the guides involved three major stages: reading and sorting; classifying and consensus; and describing and confirming.

Reading and Sorting. Beginning with the informative pieces, the team first read approximately 60 randomly selected papers from each grade level, which comprised about 10 percent of all the informative papers. Based on a general, holistic impression, team members sorted the papers into four to six groups ranging from highest to lowest.

This stage involved confirming that all of the papers first classified as informative were genuinely informative. The team defined informative as those papers that had, implicitly or explicitly, the purpose of conveying information or ideas. Thank you letters and opinion statements are examples of some of the papers that were reclassified because their purposes were not primarily informative. Also, papers in which the teacher provided students with the first sentence to each paragraph seemed more like elaborate fill-in-the-blank worksheets than original papers. These were reclassified as skill sheets.

Classifying and Consensus. Next, the team compared the way they each had sorted the papers, discussing which papers represented high, medium, and low levels of performance. In the process, they discussed a range of criteria that could be used to evaluate writing in general and informative writing in particular. Their goal was to identify levels of development in informative writing.

To this end, the team decided to focus on the cognitive elements of the papers. When rereading the papers, they asked three questions: "How much information is the student conveying in the paper?" "What kinds of relationships do the writers establish between the ideas and information?" and "How developed are the ideas and information?"

As the discussion progressed, the team members articulated the criteria they each had used to place papers into categories. This discussion continued until a common set of criteria could be agreed upon and specified. For informative writing, the criteria related to the clarity with which students presented information and ideas, and the ways they organized or related their information and ideas.

Describing and Confirming. Using the common set of criteria, the team then described a range of performance for informative writing. Papers that exemplified each level of performance were selected. The team then applied the criteria to a new set of papers from each grade (another 10 percent of the informative papers), refining their descriptions.

At first, the fourth- and eighth-grade papers were read separately, the plan was to develop different guides for each grade. However, after the informative guide had been developed for the fourth-grade papers, and the group moved on to consider the eighth-grade informative pieces, they found that the same criteria could be applied to both grades.

The procedures outlined above were also used to develop scoring guides for the narrative and persuasive pieces. Narrative papers were defined as pieces that described a sequence of events, real, or imagined. Persuasive papers were those letters, paragraphs, or essays that stated a position or opinion primarily for the purpose of persuading or convincing. The idea of developing one generic scoring guide for all papers was discussed. However, the scoring guide development team concluded that the purposes and methods of development for the three domains were so different that they required separate sets of criteria for evaluation.

In 1992, these scoring guides were reviewed and revised, based on NAEP's experience in 1990 and a preliminary analysis of the students' 1992 portfolio writing. The scoring guides for informative and narrative writing remained the same. However, the persuasive guide was revised to better capture the range of argumentation in students' persuasive writing.

In 1990, the team considered refutation of an opposing viewpoint as essential to advanced persuasive discourse and included this in the fifth and the sixth levels of the persuasive scoring guide. A preliminary analysis of the students' portfolio writing in 1992 revealed that students' persuasive arguments might be elaborated, yet not include elements of refutation. Therefore, the fifth and sixth levels of the persuasive guide were changed to represent more advanced types of argumentation that did not necessarily have to include refutation.

It is important to note that the panel that developed the scoring guides relied on their experience as teachers and teacher educators to establish the upper ends of the three scales. They felt it was possible and desirable to project, based on their own knowledge of written discourse (and also on the few upper-range papers submitted), the key features of complex narrative, informative, and persuasive writing. Also, it should be noted that creativity, as an aspect of writing separate from development, was not represented in the scoring guides used for this study.

Applying the Evaluative Guides

Scoring the Writing. Using the scoring guides specially designed for the study, a group of readers was trained to apply the scoring guides to students' portfolio submissions. The readers had extensive experience in scoring students' writing, but they were not necessarily writing specialists or practicing teachers. The four-day training consisted of four main elements: (1) introduction to the student portfolios; (2) writing process and domain knowledge development; (3) explanation of the scoring guides; and (4) practice at applying the scoring guides.

On the first day of training, the readers were introduced to examples of student portfolios, the Teacher Questionnaire (see Appendix D) and the Descriptive Coding Sheet developed for the portfolio scoring in this study. Using the practice portfolios, the scorers examined a number of portfolios and were trained in specific procedures for using the Descriptive Coding Sheet. (Two areas that required in-depth training across the four days were Evidence of Process and Types of Writing.)

Later on the first day, an overview of process approaches to writing instruction was presented in order to provide readers with enough information about writing process to enable them to look reliably for evidence of writing process when scoring the actual folders. First, the readers were provided with an outline of writing process theories and a previewing guide for a video tape about writing process. The basic tenets and instructional procedures of process writing approaches were presented.[31] The readers then viewed a video tape of a classroom where writing process was implemented. This was followed by practice scoring using the Descriptive Coding Sheet.

On the second day, an overview of the three classifications of writing was presented: narrative, expository, and persuasive. Major elements of narrative discourse structure were presented. Readers received instruction in story grammar methods for describing various story elements[32] and in the major narrative forms and their defining characteristics.[33] Using a number of

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[31] Donald H. Graves, *Writing: Teachers and children at Work*, (Exeter, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983).

[32] N. Stein and C. Glenn, "An Analysis of Story Comprehension in Elementary School Children," in *New Directions in Discourse*, R. Freedle, editor (Norwood, NJ: ABLEX, 1979).

[33] Donald J. Leu and Charles K. Kinzer, *Effective Reading Instruction, K-8*, (New York, NY: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1991).

examples at each grade, readers identified the major elements of narrative story structure. They then scored samples of fourth- and eighth-grade children's stories from the NAEP 1990 Portfolio Study using the Narrative Scoring Guide.

On the third day, expository text structure was presented and on the fourth day, persuasive text structure was presented.[34] The same procedures as had been used for narrative texts were used to educate readers about expository and persuasive text structure. After a final review, readers then proceeded to code the students' portfolios and evaluate any narrative, informative, and persuasive writing found in students' folders. Their work was supervised by specially trained table leaders, who constantly checked on individual scorer's activities.

Interrater Agreement. Thirty percent of the papers in each domain received a blind second scoring — the second reader could not see the score given to the paper by the first reader. Table C.3 presents the rate of reliability and agreement between the two readers.

The reliability coefficient is a correlation between the scores assigned to papers by the first and second readers, taking into account not only when two scorers disagreed but also the size of their disagreement. In assessment programs or research projects where results are not reported by student, coefficients above 0.60 are considered acceptable.

When using a six-point scale, agreement within one score point, which is called adjacent agreement, is calculated because increasing the size of the scale requires that readers make more refined distinctions between each level. With a six-level scoring guide, any percentage adjacent agreement above 90 percent is considered strong. The percent exact agreement is also presented in Table C.2. Exact reliabilities in the 50-60 percent range are somewhat low, due in part to factors discussed below.

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[34] Vacca, R.T. and Vacca, J.L., *Content Area Reading: Third Edition* (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1989).

Table C.3

Interrater Reliabilities and Percent Adjacent Agreement

	Reliability Coefficient	Percent Adjacent Agreement	Percent Exact Agreement
Narrative			
Fourth	0.59	98	51
Eighth	0.62	93	53
Informative			
Fourth	0.66	96	58
Eighth	0.68	93	53
Persuasive			
Fourth	0.41*	93*	67*
Eighth	0.61	90	52
Overall Scoring			
Fourth	0.65	97	56
Eighth	0.66	93	53

*Interpret the fourth-grade persuasive category with caution due to the small sample size.

Note: The scoring was based on a six-point scale.

SOURCE: National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 1992 Writing Assessment

If it had been possible to sort students' portfolio submissions into the three domains and then have readers evaluate each domain directly after they received training on that domains' scoring guide, interrater reliabilities probably would have been higher. However, this method was not logistically feasible because of the difficulty in managing the large numbers of papers submitted. Instead, readers received training on how to record various descriptive aspects of students' portfolios (coding) and how to evaluate three types of writing (scoring). Then, they began to code and score students' portfolios.

This method enabled readers to work with one folder at a time, thus maximizing coding accuracy, but not optimizing interrater agreement for scoring. Given the complexity of coding and scoring students' portfolios, the use of 6-level scoring guides, and the great variety in students' writing (even within each domain), the reliabilities achieved in this study fall within acceptable limits. For future studies of this type, procedures for managing portfolio folders and maximizing interrater reliability need to be examined.

Appendix D

Administration Materials

1. Fall Announcement to Schools
2. Directions to Teachers
3. Cover of Portfolio Folder — Directions to Students
4. Teacher Questionnaire

1. Fall Announcement to Schools

Dear Principal and NAEP School Coordinator:

Many thanks for your cooperation in NAEP's 1992 assessment. The participation of schools like yours in NAEP enables us to develop innovative assessments, from which teachers can draw information pertinent for their promotion of students' thinking and learning.

Following up on the introductory materials you recieved about the 1992 assessment, I am enclosing further information on the two new components of NAEP 1992: assessments of students reading aloud and their school-based writing.

The Integrated Reading Performance Record. A small number of fourth grade students taking NAEP's reading assessment will be selected to participate in an audiotaped interview during which they read aloud. Each student will be invited to bring his or her favorite book to this post-assessment interview, read aloud, and answer a few questions about reading preferences. As with all of NAEP, the information on the important skills of reading aloud will be analyzed and reported for the nation; no student names will be collected.

The Nation's Writing Portfolio. A small number of fourth- and eighth-grade students taking NAEP's writing assessment will be selected to participate in collection of school-based writing. In the fall, teachers and students will begin collecting writing that students have completed for their English or language arts classes. At the time of the writing assessment, students will review their work and choose the three best pieces. (For each of approximately three students selected to participate, teachers will be asked to take a few minutes to fill out a brief questionaire describing the assignment that led to each student's writing.)

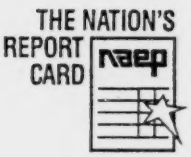
In preparing for the Writing Portfolio study, it would be most helpful if you could advise your fourth grade teachers and eighth-grade English or language arts teachers to begin putting aside the school-based writing in which they and their students take the most pride.

At assessment time, as you speak with the students who will participate in NAEP, please feel free and encourage them to give their very best efforts on the National Assessment, which is the nation's only ongoing monitor of the academic achievement of our elementary, junior high, and high school students. By participating in NAEP your students are making history!

We, in turn, will send you and your teachers copies of the reports of these innovative national assessments.

As always, your generous cooperation is most appreciated.

2. Directions to Teachers



Dear Fourth- and Eighth-Grade Teachers,

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is conducting a special project this year, called **The Nation's Portfolio**, to provide information about the writing students do in school. The students whose names appear on the attached folders have been selected to participate and we are asking for your cooperation and assistance at the following three stages of the project.

COLLECTING: If students have not already saved samples of the writing they have done for their language arts or English classes throughout the school year, please have them assemble as much of their work as possible.

SELECTING: Help the students whose names appear on the attached Portfolio Folders review the writing they have collected and select THREE pieces of writing that represent:

- their BEST writing effort;
- a RANGE of types of writing tasks (such as stories, reports, essays, persuasive pieces); and
- the use of WRITING PROCESS strategies (such as successive drafts, use of reference sources, and peer review).

DESCRIBING: After helping students make their selections, have them write a letter to us explaining why they chose their three pieces and what they like about them. Then, have them place copies* of their three pieces of writing and their letters in the Portfolio Folders.

Next, to help us to better understand the students' selections, please fill out the brief questionnaire located inside each student's Portfolio Folder. The students' Portfolio Folders will be collected by the NAEP administrator on the date of the regular NAEP writing assessment.

Thank you for participating in **The Nation's Portfolio** and for helping us develop innovative methods of writing assessment that reflect the richness and diversity of students' classroom writing.

*We are sorry, but we will not be able to return the schoolwork you provide. Please send copies of students' work if you do not want us to keep the originals.

3. Cover of Portfolio Folder — Directions to Students

Student Directions
(to be printed on the cover of each students' portfolio folder)

PORTFOLIO FOLDER

Student Identification Number: ___ ___ - ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ - ___

Dear Student,

Thank you for being a part of ***The Nation's Portfolio***. Your work will help schools across the country improve the way students' writing is tested.

Please review the writing you have done for your language arts or English class so far this year and select THREE pieces that:

* represent your BEST writing effort;
* represent a RANGE of types of writing tasks (such as stories, reports, essays, persuasive pieces); and
* represent the use of WRITING PROCESS strategies (such as doing pre-writing activities, revising your papers, sharing your papers with classmates).

After you select three pieces, write a letter to us telling us

* WHY YOU SELECTED each of these pieces;
* WHAT YOU LIKED about each of them; and
* WHAT THEY SHOW about you as a writer.

Thank you for being a part of ***The Nation's Portfolio***.

4. Teacher Questionnaire

Teacher Response Sheet
(printed on separate page to go inside each Portfolio Folder)

Student Identification Number: ___ ___ - ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ - ___

THE FIRST SELECTION

How much time did the student spend working on this piece of writing?

_____

Please briefly describe the assignment for which this piece was written.

_____

_____

_____

Please briefly describe any instructional activities that were associated with this assignment (for example, freewriting, peer discussion, drafting, revising).

_____

_____

_____

THE SECOND SELECTION

How much time did the student spend working on this piece of writing?

_____

Please briefly describe the assignment for which this piece was written.

_____

_____

_____

Please briefly describe any instructional activities that were associated with this assignment (for example, freewriting, peer discussion, drafting, revising).

_____

_____

_____

THE THIRD SELECTION

How much time did the student spend working on this piece of writing?

_____

Please briefly describe the assignment for which this piece was written.

_____

_____

_____

Please briefly describe any instructional activities that were associated with this assignment (for example, freewriting, peer discussion, drafting, revising).

_____

_____

_____

Additional Comments:

Appendix E

Examples of Students' Portfolio Writing

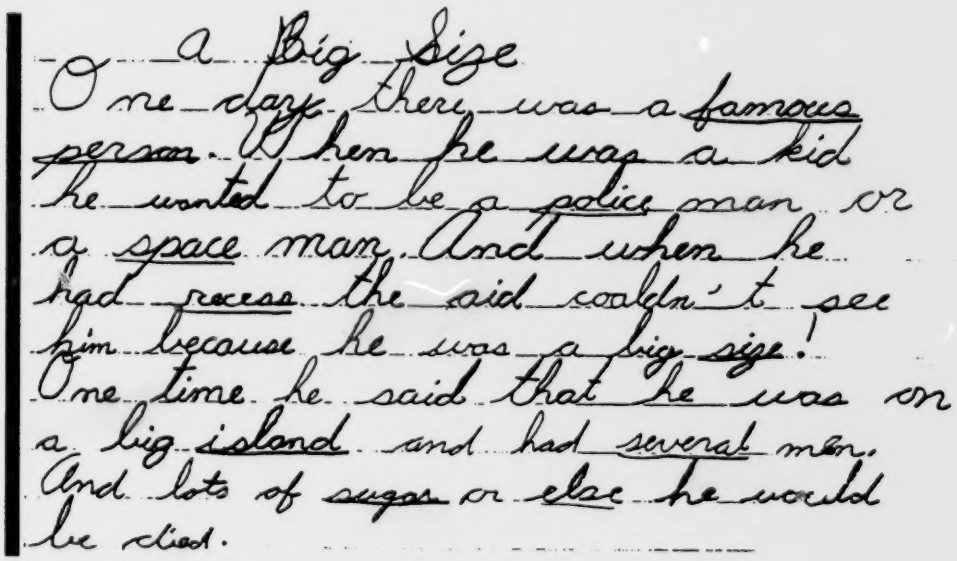
1. **Narrative Writing**
2. **Informative Writing**
3. **Persuasive Writing**
4. **Poems**
5. **Letters**
6. **Skill Sheets**

1. Narrative Writing

The following examples illustrate the range of stories submitted by the students who participated in this study. The students' papers are arranged according to the scores they received when they were evaluated. Each set of samples is preceded by an explanation of how these papers fit into the corresponding category.

1: Event Description. The two papers below are examples of *Event Descriptions*. They describe a single happening, rather than a series of events.

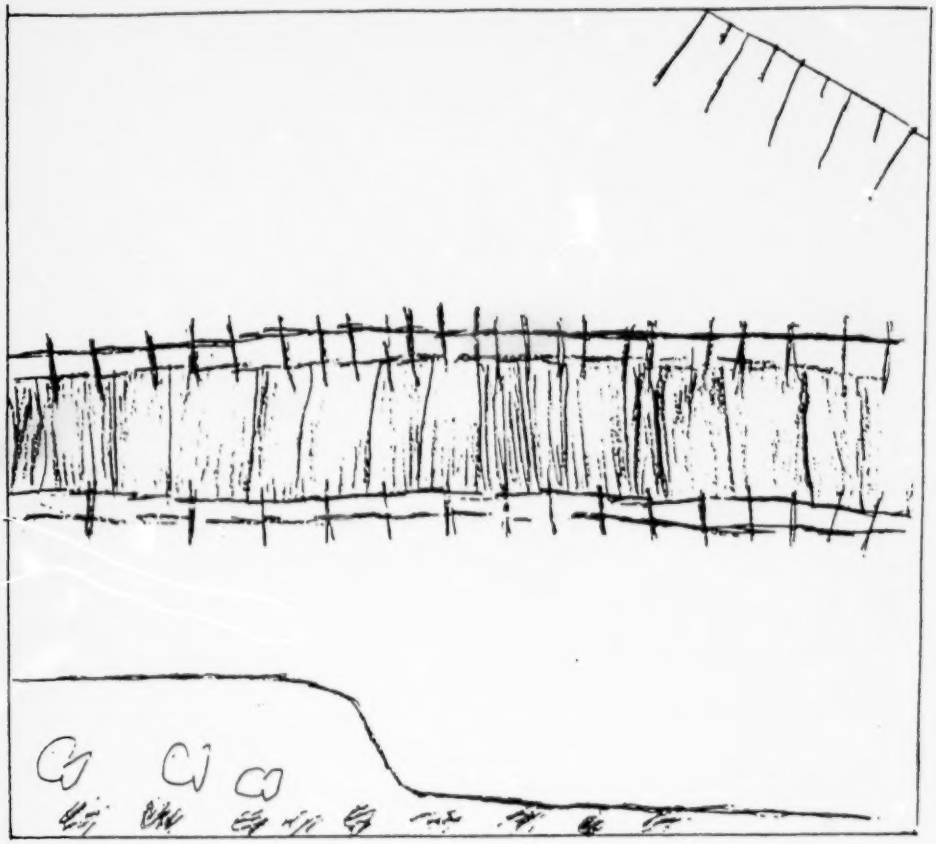
Example #1 (Fourth Grade)



a Big Size

One dayz there was a famous person. When he wrap a kid he wanted to be a police man or a space man. And when he had recess the said coudn't see him because he was a big size! One time he said that he was on a big island and had several men. And lots of sugar or else he would be died.

Example #2 (Fourth Grade)



We went to the Oak Canyon Nature Center it was a lot of fun we saw an owl and an quail and acorns and a lot of poison oak I had a lot of fun and I saw a red-shouldered hawk and we saw mallard duck we saw a lot we saw pokey he is a opposum that is all.

2: Undeveloped Story. The two papers below are examples of *Undeveloped Stories*. These stories are a series of events, but the events, as well as the setting and characters, are only briefly described. These stories are similar to front-page newspaper reports, where the basic facts of a story are reported (who, what, when, where) but few details are presented about why events happened.

Example #1 (Fourth Grade)

THE HOUSE ON MAPLE STREET

A LONG TIME AGO. THE SEVILLES LIVED HAPPILY. BUT IN THE LAST FEW DAYS THERE WERE ROBBIES OF ROCKET BOOSTERS FROM NASA. THE SEVILLIES DIDN'T KNOW THEIR KIDS [MIKE AND KATE] WERE THE ROBBERS!

MIKE AND KATE WERE THE INTERESTED IN ROCKET ROCKET BOOSTERS. THEY HID THE ROCKETS UNDER A COVER IN THE BASEMENT.

MIKE AND KATE COMMITTED SIX MORE ROBBERIES. NOW THEY HAD TWENTY ROCKET BOOSTERS.

THEIR PARENTS WERE WORRIED. MIKE AND KATE GOT BAD GRADES IN SCHOOL. THEY EACH PASSED WITH C'S.

MIKE MADE BLUEPRINTS. THEY LOOKE LIKE THIS:

THEN THEY TRIED IT. IT WAS A PERFECT LIFT-OFF! THE HOUSE JUST ABOUT MADE IT TO THE UPPER STRATOSPHERE.

THEN A HEAT-SEEKING MISSILE HIT A ROCKET BOOSTER!

"WE'RE GOING DOWN!" SAID KATE.

"THAT'S PRETTY DEAR!" SAID MIKE.

"OUR PARENTS ARE COMING AT 8:00!" SAID KATE.

"SO?" SAID MIKE. "OUR PARENT'S WILL KILL US!"

"IT'S 7:59!"

"SHUT OFF THE BOOSTERS!" SAID MIKE."

THEY HIT GROUND. THEN THE SIVILLES CAME HOME!

"WHAT'S THE MESS?" SAID MRS. SEVILLE.

"ITS A LONG STORY." SAID MIKE.

Example #2 (Fourth Grade)

On the first day I u my magical sunglasses I wanted to know if I will become famous. What kind of job I will have. When will I get married and how many kids I will have. I wanted to know who I was going to marry.

My glasses showed me that I would have 2 children; I would marry Luke Perry., I will be famous. I will be a singer & a actress. I would live in a castle. The best thing is that my husband plays on Beverly Hills 90210. I get to Star On his show.

On the third day I would see where I would live. Oh by the way my two childrens names our Rachel and Kristen. I can see I will hav a good audication and a scholar ship. I will go to the best college. My Kids will go to Emerson School. Well as for as I can see I have a great futre.

3: Basic Story. The two papers below are examples of *Basic Stories*. In these stories, the writers describe a series of events and go beyond a simple list of related events. Some aspect of the story (the events, the characters' goals, or the setting) are somewhat developed. However, these stories lack a sense of cohesion and completeness. They may have problems with syntax or sequencing of events.

Example #1 (Fourth Grade)

January 9, 1992

Story

One Saturday the Boone's went to the moon.

The ~~Boones~~ Boones were surprised at hoar many people were already on the moon. One person that was staying there said, "Hi in a strang way.

The kids were already have fun. When a a huge meteor fell from nowhere! The Boone's heard what happened and went to see if they ~~ob~~ could help.

"What's the problem?" Mr. Boone asked. The meteor hit a family when they were walking.

"Do you have a dumptruck?" Mr Boone said. He said, "Yes, we do." They took the truck and lifted the meteor! Luckily the ~~meteor~~ family got in a whole before the meteor hit.

They had a good day and saw a parade.

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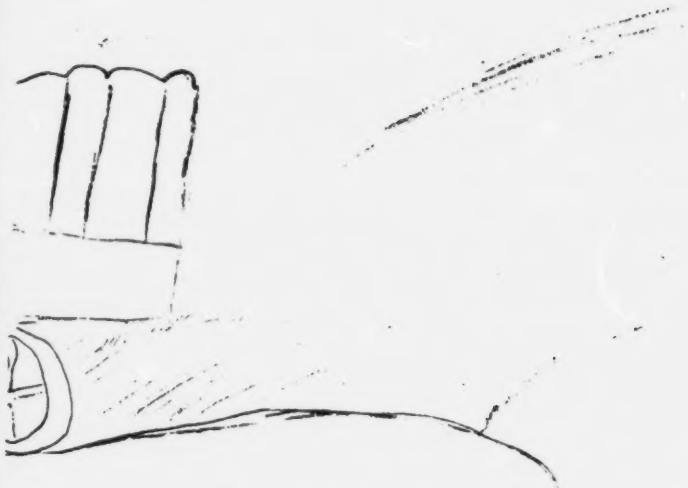
Example #2 (Fourth Grade)

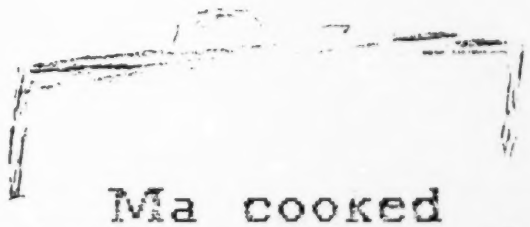
WE GO ON THE TRAIL



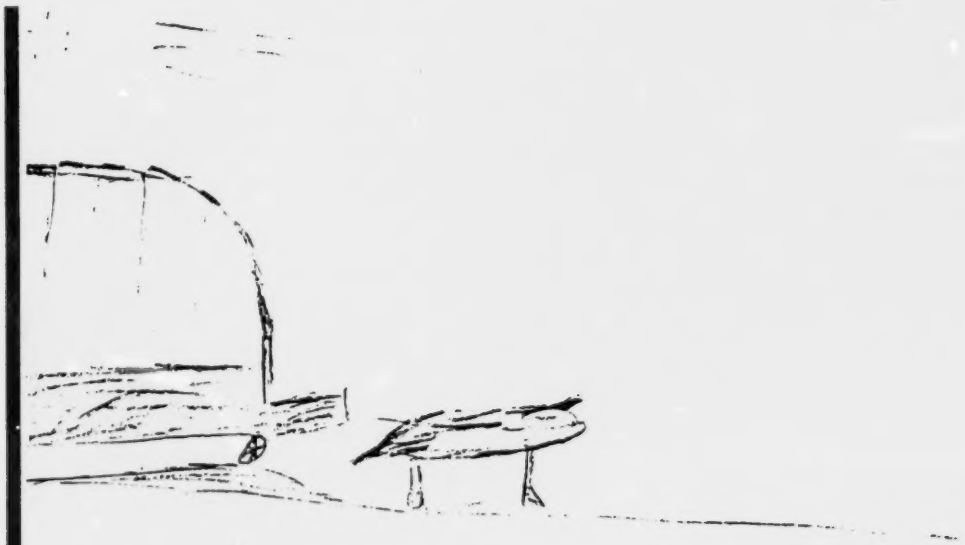
"It was a hard trip
on the ocean" said Mary.
But this is even harder
packing the covered wagon
we have to pack food,
clothing wood and water.
We are in Pennsylvania
we are going to Nebraska.

I asked if I could bring Lady, our dog. Ma said, "yes". We are cooking lots of food like cabbage stew, roast beef, fried chicken and turkey, boiled corn, corn mush, and milk.

We are making soap. Pa shot some rabbits today. He also got some deer too. Tomorrow we leave.



Ma cooked especially good food for dinner. We had chicken with gravy and salad with dressing a nd for dessert we had cherry pie and blueberry pie and raspberries. Today we start off I am so excited.



It is night now. Pa shot a buffalo it tasted so good. Pa said that we might cross the border tomorrow.

Ma's fixing a bed for you in the wagon. My eyes popped open the next morning the first thing I thought was we are going to Nebraska. Suddenly Pa came in. He said "one of the oxen died during the night". He said that we would not make it with only three oxen so we would live here.

4: Extended Story. The two papers below are examples of *Extended Stories*. In these papers, many of the events are somewhat elaborated, giving the sense of a sequence of distinct story episodes. Details are given about the setting, the characters' goals, problems to be solved, and the key events. Yet, these stories are confusing or incomplete. The characters' goals may be left unresolved, the problem posed in the story's opening never solved. The ending may not match the beginning or the story's ending may be inconsistent with the internal logic established throughout the rest of the story.

Example #1 (Eighth Grade)

Amanda and the Forest

Amanda, a sweet young girl, walked through a large colorful forest. The green trees were as tall as buildings. She wandered to her special place. When she got to the open clearing, she laid out her pink and purple checkered blanket and sat down. The scent from the bright flowers reminded her of her

mothers sweet perfume. The delicate daisies and bushes lilies swayed in the wind. A slight breeze blew her long blond hair back.

Coming deep into the ~~forest helped Amand~~ forest helped Amanda forget about her problem for a short while. Everytime her parents started to argue, she would ~~he~~ come here and express herself since she is such an inocent quite person. While watching the deer and bunnies play through the tall green grass, she laughed. The birds

chirped a wonderful melody as they sung As Amanda started to get sleepy and her big blue eyes closed, she began dreaming about living in a the peaceful forest someday. A cold wet feeling against her skin woke her. When she looked up, she saw a gray and white little bunny. Its furry hair rubbed against her creamy smooth skin. It tickled her Once more the forest could hear her

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lovely laugher. Amanda stroked the lively creature. After awhile passed, the bunny hopped off. Gathering her blanket, she started home, knowing she would return so she could be happy again

Example #2 (Eighth Grade)

" Almost There "

Creativity 100
Mechanics 96

The bright, city lights shown all around the crowded, city streets as I stepped off the train from Kansas. Before I knew it, I had been sucked into the relentless crowd. All kinds of people were walking hurriedly towards their own destinations. An excitement of homecoming soldiers was evident as joyful looking expressions were portrayed on each individual's face. The paper's headlines all announced the return of the victorious swashbucklers. These combatants walked proudly along the streets with their heads held high in the air.

Many enjoyed their Saturday off, while other steadfast laborers did not stop from their endless, fruitful exertions. Many of these tireless workers were moving crates of wine into the nearby tavern. While other handymen were taking large sacks of grain from the back of an old truck to the bakery across the street. Sweat dripped from their squinting brows as they heaved the monstrous burdens upon to their brawny shoulders. Two men stood by the newstand looking over their crumpled newpapers as if they were Secret Service men watching for a criminal to step off the train. They had suspicious-looking faces as if they were undercover agents searching for some sort of clue. As my eyes lifted to the skyline of this strange city, I asked myself how in the world I was going to find my way around these entangled, city streets. With a little wish, hope, and a prayer I set out to find a place to stay.

I shoved through that frantic mass of people, gasping for air as I reached the far side. I walked along the busy street looking in each of the dimly lit windows. I saw large men drinking beer and laughing in the tavern. I saw several mannequins dressed up in high class tuxedos and dresses. The next window I did not have to look in. I already knew that it had to be the bakery. I had smelled the sweet aroma of the hot, buttered bread drifting capriciously through the air. My mouth watered as I began to sense the taste of the delicious-looking bread. I had planned on finding a room before anything else was done, but the ambrosial scent of the bread allured me into the quaint, little boulangerie. I sat down over in an isolated corner, while I ate a loaf of delicious, French bread. As I gazed at my watch for a few minutes, I happened to notice the time. It was already five-thirty! I greedily scarfed down the rest of the bread while dashing out the door. In my carelessness, I swung the gate open and sent an old lady sprawling on the ground. Her groceries rolled all over the stony sidewalk and into the street. She scrambled to her feet as I helped put the items back in her bag. When apologies had been made, I dashed off towards the hotel. I decided to take a shortcut through a darkened alleyway to save time. Along the way I dodged many foul-smelling scrap

piles and the rats that accompanied them. The stench of mildewed garbage and soot drenched my clothes by the time I reached the end of the lane. This was no way to smell where I was headed! I had to get cleaned up quick!

I sprinted towards an antiquated building which read, "Meadowview Inn." I threw open the door to find an old, run- down office filled with smoke. An old man sat smoking a cigar with his hat pulled over his eyes and his legs spread across his cluttered desk. A long string of bells clamored as the door slammed shut. The scratchy-faced man raised his head to look me over. All he said was, "Twenty-nine fifty, you want the key, it's on the hook." This wasn't exactly the kind of place I had in mind, but reluctantly I took the key and went upstairs. I coughed and choked after inhaling so much smoke. I could not concieve someone living with such a thick cloud hanging above them all the time. I climbed the stairs three at a time. I flung myself around the corner and ran the length of the hall, where I found my room. Out of breath and exhausted, I felt like falling into a deep sleep, but no, I had to continue. I had to complete my mission. I was in and out of the shower in no time. I threw my wrinkled clothes on and grabbed my leather jacket. In less than five minutes I was ready to go. I called my friend Jake and told him to meet me at the corner of Cornwallis Drive and Randall Avenue in two minutes. I gained my momentum once again as I raced frantically down the hall. I jumped on the banister and slid down to the bottom floor. I dashed through the cloud of smoke and out the front door. I shot the gaps through the crowd of people walking along the sidewalk. I became overcome with frustration when I found myself trapped behind a slow-moving, elderly couple. When I was about to reach my final destination, I felt a surge in my spirits because I knew I was about to complete my task. I saw Jake standing a block away waiting for my arrival. I slowed for a brief moment to catch my breath. In the corner of my eye I caught a glimpse of a big, bright, red sports car flying by in the far lane. I turned to see an outstretched arm pointing a gun out of the window. THE LAST THING I SAW WAS THE SHINY BARREL OF A 44 MAGNUM POINTING STRAIGHT AT MY HEAD.

"I believe I except after conclude"

Super! your expression are BIG Wow! You could develop this into a story - The ending is shockingly abrupt and leaves the reader dissatisfied - It's need more clues -

5: Developed Story. The two samples below illustrate the *Developed Story*. These papers describe a sequence of episodes in which almost all of the events and story elements are somewhat elaborated. Yet, an aspect of these stories is not well developed, such as the ending or a crucial event.

Example #1 (Eighth Grade)

Once in a place where the trees touched the sky and the water glistened blue, the most majestic creatures roamed. Emerald scaled dragons dozed lazily by the streams, and birds soared through the clouds, the sun glinting off their brilliant plumage. There also lived unicorns with manes of silk, large, round sapphire eyes and wings of silvery splendor.

One fine Spring day a unicorn by the name of Glitterwings was born. She was a strong colt and before long, she was laughing and frolicking playfully with the other animals of the forest. A few weeks later her mother called her to speak to her.

"Glitterwings, you soon shall learn to fly."

This excited Glitterwings. She closed her eyes and imagined herself soaring gracefully over treetops and cliffs. The very next morning, Glitterwings rose early and awakened her mother.

"Mother, mother! Teach me to fly! I want to fly!"

A few hours later, they reached a small plateau where the young unicorn could practice.

"Now, do as I say," her mother instructed. "Take a deep breath, run as fast as you can, spread your wings and leap."

Glitterwings did as she told. As she inhaled, her eyes narrowed, focusing on the edge of the plateau. She ran at top speed, spread her wings. The next thing she remembered was being sprawled out on the grass, and her mother standing over her.

She helped Glitterwings to her feet.

"Do not worry, you'll improve with practice."

Her mother's words were comforting, and practice she did, and finally, she was able to soar a few yards and land, ~~though often a bit~~ awkwardly.

At the end of the week Glitterwings and her mother walked to a much steeper and higher cliff overlooking a soft grassy meadow dotted with trees. At the sight of the steep drop, Glitterwings froze. She knew she could not fly over such a deep cliff. Even with her mother's demonstration and encouragement, she would not budge. Her mother knew she could not push her, but simply said:

"Being afraid of new things is natural, but you'll never succeed unless you try."

With tears in her eyes, Glitterwings ran off. She ran and ran deep into the forest. She had disappointed her mother and felt embarrassed about being afraid. Finally, when she grew too tired to run anymore, she collapsed in the shelter of a magnolia tree.

"All the other unicorns will make fun of me because I can't fly," lamented the young unicorn ~~to herself~~.

"Well, tell me now youngn', is it ya' can't fly or ya' won't fly?"

At the sound of the strange voice, Glitterwings jumped up, startled.

"Who-wh-who said that?" she called.

Instead of answering, the voice went on.

"I see ya' got wings, now what seems to be the trouble?"

Glitterwings looked up into the branches of the tree to find a plump black, rather small bird looking down inquisitively at her.

"Who are you?" asked the unicorn.

"I'm called ol' Wisefeathers. Who are you?"

"I'm ol' Glitterwings, and my wings may glitter, but they don't work," she answered.

"Ah now, wouldja' like ta' know why?"

"Yes, why? Why don't they work?" Glitterwings inquired.

"That's easy lass. Ya' don't believe ya' can!"

"I don't believe I can because I can't!"

"Well, thar's yer problem. If you don't believe in yer dreams they'll never come true! But if you have confidence in yerself then ya' can't go wrong! Just believe me and try it. You don't think that unicorns can fly if thar a tellin' themselves they can't,do ya'?"

This was beginning to make sense to Glitterwings. The more the bird spoke, the more confident the young unicorn felt. Her head lifted higher and higher with each sentence that escaped the wise beak. She decided to rest in the forest and go home in the morning to tell her of her new found confidence. The bird was still asleep, his beak nestled in his feathers when she left.

It doesn't make sense that she would sleep & have him tell it all dawn

"Goodbye!" she whispered, "Thank you!"

The sun was just peeking over the distant mountains in magnificent golden splendor when she reached her home. Her mother had been up all night.

"Glitterwings, my child where have you been? I slept not a wink because of my worrying!"

"Oh mother, I met a new friend who told me how believing in yourself can help you make any dream come true! I will fly after all."

Once again they set out for the cliff. When they reached it, Glitterwings did not freeze, she did not run away, instead, she charged forward with all the confidence in the

world. She spread her wings and leaped into the air. She did not fall. She whinnied with excitement. Other foals who had come to practice watched in awe of Glitterwing's grace. And as she soared and dipped and rode the wind, she remembered the wise bird who had taught her that believing in yourself is the key which will open the door to any dream.

Perfect 5+

Just to stretch — perhaps a section where the other unicorns make fun of her fear and ridicule with — "your wings may glitter, but they don't work"

Example #2 (Eighth Grade)

THE SCOUT by

As the building livened up, Jarrett Hintzz is quietly working at his desk. He sighs as he faces the mountain of papers. A few minutes later the phone rings.

"Hello, Jarrett Hintz speaking"

"Hi Jarrett, this is Dave Freeman. Im a scout for the 49ERS," Jarrett almost jumped back. "He sent to the major cities for a chance at going pro in football over a year ago. "Wed like you to come on out to San Fransisco for game time on Friday to start working on plays."

"Ill have to call you back" Jarrett answered. After the call he went to get a cup of coffee. He was shaking as he walked. He was confused. He send the letter over a year ago, during college football at Penn St. How come the scout called now? He went back to work.

At his lunch break, he went to the small downtown cafe to meet his astonishingly beautiful girlfriend, Brooke Anderson. They were engaged to be married in (3) three months. Jarrett couldn't break the news of the scout. so he kept quiet. Brooke felt he was worried.

"What's the matter, Jarrett? Youve been real quiet lately" She asked.

"A pro scout called me at the office today, and he wants me to go to San Fransisco to play with the 49ERS by Friday." He sighed, "I just don't know what to do."

"You can't have your job here in Buffalo and play ball in San Francisco. And what about our engagement." Brooke whined.

"I don't know," Jarrett replied, "I'm going to take the rest of the day off to think about it."

So Jarrett hopped in his sports car and drove to the suburbs. "If anyone knows how to solve a problem," he thought, "it's my dad." He pulled up to 1337 Diamond Ave. His dad, Byron was an old man of 59, but he was in good health. He answered the door.

"Dad, I have to talk." Jarrett blurted out. They went in the living room and sat down.

"I have to decide between two things I want, but I can't have both." He explained

Byron squinted, thought for a second and answered "Which means more to ya?"

"I guess, Brooke. We've been going out for two years now." Jarrett said.

"O.K. there's yer answer, sonny." Byron replied

They spent the day talking together. Near 4:00, Jarrett left to call the scout. He arrived to find Brooke waiting at the door. They both went inside. Suddenly the phone rang. It was the scout.

"Hinton, are you coming we're willing to pay big." Freeman barked.

Jarrett thought a second and replied, "I can't. I'd have to leave my job, girlfriend, and relatives."

Freeman was silent. Then he said to Jarrett, "would your girlfriend want a job?"

Jarrett was stunned by the remark. He turned to Brooke and asked her. "Mr. Freeman, what sort of job?" he asked. "Cheerleading. We can use some publicity. We'll flag you and your girlfriend out Thursday night and set up. We'll have a house waiting in the suburbs of Oakland. Car is included. What do you say!?"

Jarrett turned to talk to Brooke. "How about living in San Francisco?"

"You mean it?" Brooke squealed.

"Yep, they're offering everything for both of us." Jarrett answered.

"Go for it!" Brooke said excitedly.

"Mr. Freeman, we'll be there." Jarrett replied.

"O.K. Bye" came the reply.

Then Brooke left to pack. Jarrett did the same. Jarrett picked Brooke up at the restaraunt, drove to the airport and left for San Francisco where he was a star quarterback for 10 years before retiring.

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6: Elaborated Story. Few papers were considered to be *Elaborated Stories.* To be classified as elaborated, these stories had to present a sequence of episodes in which almost all of the events and story elements were well developed. Goals or problems introduced in the beginning were well resolved by the end; characters' motives were well developed; and the entire story was cohesive and unified.

The Blizzard

It was the fourth evening of Henry's hunting trip. Henry briskly walked back to his campsite. he laid down the rifle he was carrying and climbed into a soft, warm sleeping bag. Within a minute he was sound asleep.

In the morning Henry woke up freezing because because during the night a blizzard had arisen. He gathered his belongings and began his long walk out of the forest. The wind screamed and howled like a madman. Furiously, it slapped his face. Within ten minutes Henry was cold, wet and tired. He was not sure if he was headed in the right direction because was a white blur of snow in front of him. He was having doubts if he would ever make it to the end of the forest.

With a heavy bag on his shoulders, he fought the wind and snow with all his might, like a raging bull trying to defeat the matidor. He was wishing he could be safe at home sitting in his armchair, with a fire in the fireplace and his golden retriever at his feet instead of being stuck in a blizzard. His eyes felt like they were weighted down with heavy bars of iron. He wanted to lie down in the snow and give up, but he kept telling himself that he had to continue.

After an hour, Henry's bones felt like they were about to collapse and he was hungry, thoroughly numb and frostbitten. In the distance he could hear the the cars on the highway hum, so he trudged on. His bones were as stiff as sticks, and it was hard for him to continue. His brain

kept telling him that he had to continue, but his muscles told him to lie down in the snow.

Henry kept on walking in the direction of where he thought the highway was, but he soon realized that he had been walking in the wrong direction. He could not hear the highway anymore and he had lost all hope of ever getting out of the forest. He could not walk anymore so he collapsed onto a soft, white blanket. He closed his eyes and fell asleep in a bed of snow.

Henry did not realize that there was a cottage hidden by the trees, only a few feet away. The old man who lived in this cottage had seen him fall in the snow so he had put on his long, grey overcoat and stumbled out of his house into the blizzard. He took a few steps toward the snow-covered body, then tumbled into the snow. He managed to get up again and stumble towards Henry. He slowly inched Henry's body towards his house. Finally, the old man reached his front door, dragging Henry behind him. The old man roled Henry's cold body towards the fireplace. He felt Henry's pulse. There was still a faint beet. The old man sat back in his rocker and stared at Henry for over an hour, seeing if he would blink an eye or wiggle a finger. Just as the man was about to fall asleep, Henry uttered a few words. "Excuse me sir, where am I?"

2. Informative Writing

The following examples illustrate the range of informative writing submitted by the students who participated in this study. The students' papers are arranged according to the scores they received when they were evaluated. Each set of samples is preceded by an explanation of how these papers fit into the corresponding category.

1: Listing. The two papers below are examples of *Listings*. The writers present pieces of information or ideas all on the same topic. These papers may also contain a range of information about the topics. However, no attempt is made to relate the ideas or information.

Example #1 (Fourth Grade)

My sister is 18, and she's weird. She has short red hair. She sometimes wears lipstick. She take baths erery day and she sometimes smell nice. She is sometimes mean to me. She works at a hamburger place called Short Stop and goes to night school. I love that busy girl.

Example #2 (Fourth Grade)

My favorite game is Girl Talk. Alot of people can play the game. The rules are that you can not have 2 of the cards. You can play it any where.

2: Attempted Discussion. The two papers below are examples of *Attempted Discussions*. A range of information and/or ideas about a topic is presented in these papers. Also, in one part of each paper, some attempt is made to establish relationships between the pieces of information or ideas. However, these relationships are not clearly established. The ideas or information may be incomplete or undeveloped.

Example #1 (Fourth Grade)

Booker T. Washington
1850–1951 Equal Rights

He was the best-known black man in the United States. Booker Taliaferro Washington was born a slave at Hales Ford, Va, near Roanoke. After they were freed from slavery, they move to Malden, In 1872, he went to Hampton Institute, where he learned to lay bricks. Then he started to teach at Hampton from 1878–1881. In 1881, he founded Tuskegee Institute, a school for black kids. In that school, he became a principal until he died. He tried to stop fights between black and whites. He was a good public speaker.

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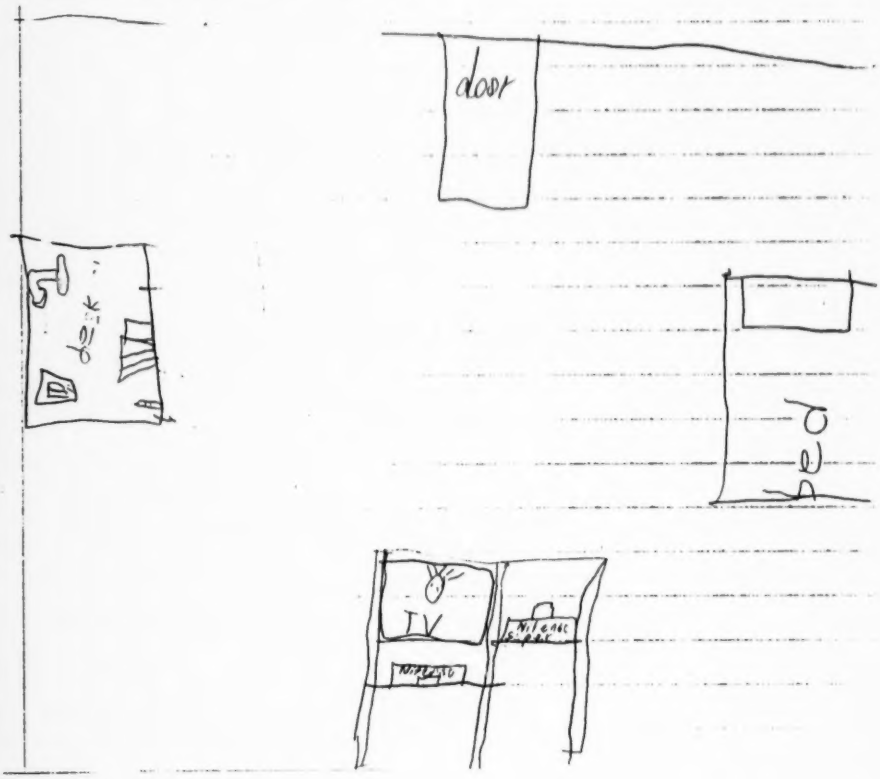
Example #2 (Fourth Grade)

When I Get Home

First I sweep the stairs and the hall way
Next I do the dishes. Then I do ice-
trays. last I check my room.



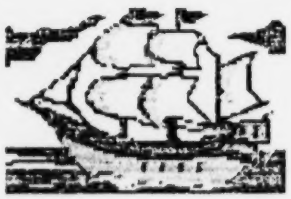
3: Undeveloped Discussion. The two papers below are examples of *Undeveloped Discussions*. These papers include a broad range of information about their topics. Relationships are somewhat established between the ideas and/or information, but not completely. The ideas may be confused, contradictory, out of sequence, illogical, or undeveloped.

Example #1 (Eighth Grade)

Writing and Sending a Letter

Here's how to write and send a letter. First, get a piece of paper, a pen or pencil, a stamp and an envelope. Next write a message to a friend or relative on a piece of paper. Now, fold your paper and put it in the envelope. Put your first and last name, address, and zip code in the upper left corner of the envelope. Next, in the center put the persons first and last name, address, and zip code. Now, put the stamp in the upper right corner. Then seal the envelope and put it in your mail box.

Example #2 (Fourth Grade)



JOHN PAUL JONES

John Paul was born on July 6, 1747 in Scotland and loved to watch the ships go by his cottage. When John was 13 he went to sea on Friendship. In 1764 he was dismissed from the Friendship.But he wasn't out for long. Soon he got two more jobs before he was captain of his own ship! But then something happened. John's ship was at anchor in the West Indies when one of the crew tried to start a mutiny. The sailor rushed at John, swinging a heavy club. John fought back with his sword and killed the mutineer. In revenge, the dead man's friends threatened to murder the captain and burn the ship. John wanted to stand his ground, but he was advised to leave quickly. Then he went to Virginia and joined the Amerian navy. Then in 1779, he fought in the Revolutionary War against Great Britian. Thirteen years later, he died. For 113 years, his body lay in a small French cemetary. Then, in 1905, he was buried at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis.

4: Discussion. The two papers below are examples of *Discussions*. In these papers, a broad range of information and/or ideas is presented. In at least one section, the writers use rhetorical devices (such as temporal order, classification, definition, comparison/contrast, cause and effect, problem/solution, goals/resolutions, predictions, speculations, drawing conclusions, point of view, ranking by importance, exemplification) to clearly relate the information and ideas.

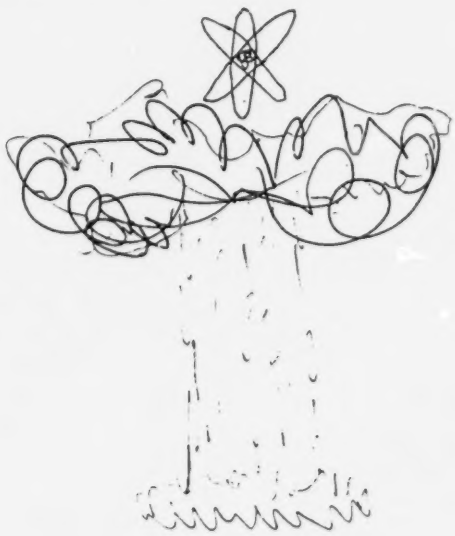
Example #1 (Fourth Grade)

MY REPORT ON THE HYDROGEN BOMB
BY [redacted]

THE HYDROGEN BOMBS GET THEIR ENERGY FROM THE FUSION OF HYDROGEN ATOMS. SUN AND STARS PRODUCE HYDROGEN ATOMS.

HYDROGEN ATOMS REACH FIFTEEN MILLION DEGREES CELSIUS. AN ATOM BOMB EXPLODES ACTING AS A TRIGGER. IT TRIGGERS THE FUSION OF THE HYDROGEN ATOMS WHICH CAUSES A MASSIVE DESTRUCTIVE FORCE. THERE ARE TWO MAIN HYDROGEN ISOTOPES - DEUTERIUM AND [redacted], AN ARTIFICIALLY MADE RADIOACTIVE ISOTOPE.

THE STEPS TO THE EXPLOSION IS THE ATOM BOMB ACTS AS A TRIGGER WHEN IT EXPLODES, THIS CAUSES THE HEAT AND PRESSURE FOR THE FUSION OF THE TWO HEAVY ISOTOPES. WHEN THIS HAPPENS THE HYDROGEN BOMB RAPIDLY RELEASES ENORMOUS AMOUNTS OF ENERGY THAT CAUSES A TREMENDOUS HIGH ENERGY EXPLOSION. THIS IS CALLED FISSION. THE FISSION PRODUCED LARGE AMOUNTS OF FISSION PRODUCTS, WHICH FALL TO EARTH AS DAMAGING FALL-OUT. THESE ARE THE EFFECTS OF THE HYDROGEN BOMB EXPLOSION. THE HYDROGEN BOMB PRODUCES AN ENORMOUS FIREBALL THAT WIPES OUT EVERYTHING IN ITS PATH. THIS FIREBALL EQUALS THREE AND A HALF MILES LONG DEPENDING ON THE SIZE OF THE BOMB OR THE WARHEAD. NEXT THE FIREBALL SPREADS OUT FURTHER. IT MAKES A SMOKEBALL WITH A HANDLE COMING FROM THE BOTTOM. FINALLY IT TURNS INTO A MUSHROOM CLOUD.



Example #2 (Eighth Grade)

Dr. King A Man For All Seasons

Dr. King tried to achieve many goals. He tried to end racisim between whites and blacks. He didn't like the racial remarks that were said to blacks. He also didn't like the idea that few blacks had jobs. If they did have jobs, it was either that of a maid or janitor.

The things he tried to tell blacks refer to today's society. There is still racisim today. Many Blacks are still struggling to get jobs while others are on Welfare.

Dr. King would be disappointed if he saw how blacks are living today. All the fighting about ending racism getting better jobs and sitting anywhere on the bus has to be fought all over again.

Dr. King dream hasn't been accomplished and the way things are going, it never will be. Equal rights for blacks needs to be fought again.

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5: Developed Discussion. The two papers below are examples of *Developed Discussions*. These papers include a broad range of information. Information and relationships are established and well developed, with explanations and supporting details. The paragraphs tend to be unified and well formed. However, the paper lacks an overriding sense of purpose, audience, and cohesion. The writers of these papers present a wide range of information on a topic, organize this information clearly, develop most of the aspects of this topic, yet do not place their discussion in context, within a wider communicative purpose.

Example #1 (Eighth Grade)

Building a Strong Character

Building a "strong character" could be defined as watching and attempting to do everything that could make you a disciplined and respectable person. Many people in our society look up to others who are either responsible, genial, or talented. A majority of people respect others who are either famous for their talents, like Micheal J. Fox; or well known for their reliability, like some leaders of our country. In order to build a strong character for yourself, you must first practice your disciplinary abilities to be reliable, respectful, and honest.

When you are reliable, people trust your judgement and your abilities to accomplish things successfully. When you want to be accepted into a well-known university, the advisors of that university usually scrutinize your scholarship grades. They also examine your reliability and directness in school clubs and organizations. If you are proven to be very reliable and accomplished in these subjects, you will most likely be accepted into an ivy

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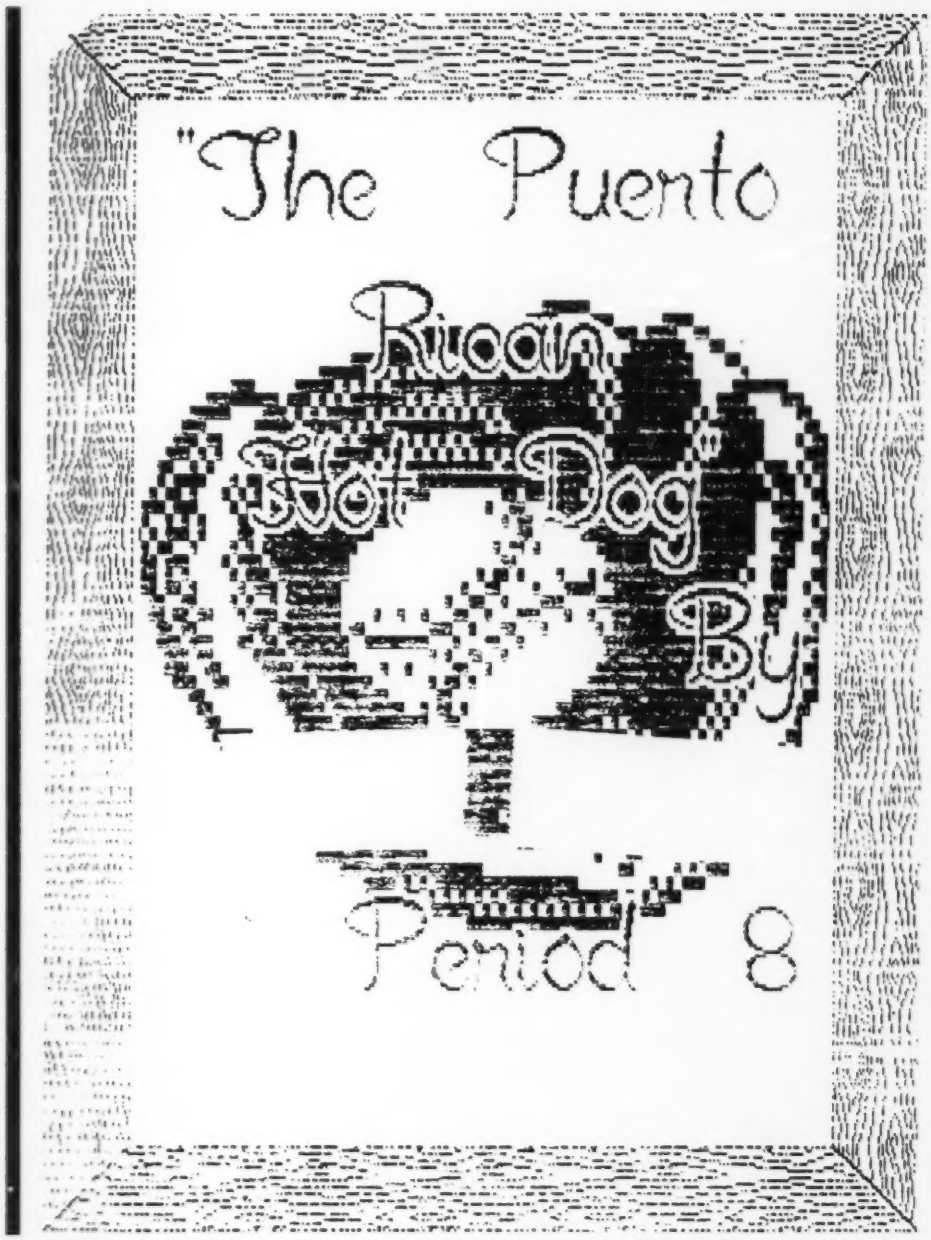
league university, and be successful in life. Being very reliable, enriches your abilities to accomplish tasks, and allows you to take one step into having a disciplined character.

Another way to strengthen you character is to respect the thoughts and ideas of others. If you are patient and tolerant of others they will be patient with you. By respecting someone, the person you are patient will most often take the time to listen to your ideas and suggestions. If you have accepted a job and you prove to your boss that you are respectful, your boss would most likely think of you as an honorable. A person who takes time and respects others has obtained an essential part of maintaining a strong character.

An important part of having a strong character is to be honest and don't try to hide your mistakes or misjudgements in your life. You should admitt to your mistakes and be honest about the real intentions of your actions. If you do this, the people who believe in your judgements and interpretations will be on your side for the right reasons and not for what they believe are the right reasons. Being honest strengthens character by making people appreciate you for who you are.

Example #2 (Eighth Grade)



"The Puerto Rican Hot Dog"

"If I owned a big league club I'd order everybody off the field and put Roberto Clemente in the outfield all by himself in fielding practice, and let him throw the ball. How can he throw" (Hano 9)! Vin Scully made this quote to describe that Roberto was such a good fielder. Also, he was a great humanitarian who died in 1972 bringing relief supplies to Nicaragua. Was Roberto Clemente the greatest right fielder of all time?

Roberto Walker Clemente was born August 18, 1934, in Carolina, Puerto Rico. He was called "Momen", a made up word, by his family. Roberto's father was Don Melchor Clemente, and mother Dona Luisa Clemente. Don was a foreman on a sugar plantation making $4 an hour. Also the family ran a grocery store and meat market. Roberto had two jobs as a child, loading and unloading his fathers trucks and delivering milk. He saved for 3 years to buy a bicycle. His hero was Monte Irvin of the New York Giants. Roberto played baseball in the strects all of the time, and was frequently late for dinner. One time that Roberto was late for dinner his mother tried to burn his bat in the fireplace.

a bit choppy

this could be rearranged slightly.

Roberto had an interesting High School career at Julio Vizcarrando High School. He was a good student and an all star athlete. Roberto's accomplishments included: javelin throwing, high jump, and triple jump. Roberto was signed by the Santurce Crabbers, a Puerto Rican League team. He was given a $500 signing bonus, a $60-a-month salary, and a new glove. Other Major League Baseball players who were on the team were Willie Mays, Orlando Cepeda, Ruben Gomez, and Herman Franks.

In 1953 Roberto had his first experience with Major League scouts. In 1953 Roberto was noticed by Brooklyn Dodger scout Al Campanis. When Roberto finished High School he was signed by the Dodgers with a $10,000 bonus and a $5,000-a-year salary. He was offered a $28,000 bonus from the Milwaukee Braves, but didn't accept it.

The Montreal Royals were Roberto's first real test to see if he was Major League material. In 1954, Roberto played for the Montreal Royals of the International League. He wasn't playing very much and got frustrated. "In one game, he hit three triples. The next day, he was sitting on the bench. If he struck out, he stayed in the game. If he got a hit, he was certain to be replaced" (Walker 38). Roberto's manager wanted him to stay hidden because any player with a bonus over $4,000 had to be on the Major League roster. The Dodgers had a great outfield: Jackie Robinson in left, Duke Snider in center, and Carl Furillo in right. So there was no room for Roberto.

Roberto was drafted by the Pirates in 1954. He had been noticed by Clyde Sukeforth of the Pittsburg Pirates while playing with the Royals. Clyde knew that Roberto was a bonus baby, a player that had a bonus of over $4,000 and wasn't on the Major League roster. Also, Clyde knew that the Pirates would finish last, so they would get the first pick in the draft. On November 22, 1954 Roberto Clemente was the #1 Draft choice over all by the Pittsburg Pirates. Roberto didn't know where Pittsburg was, but signed for $4,000.

In his rookie season, Roberto faced many challenges including a bad back. Roberto's first MLB at bat was Sunday April 17, 1955 against Johnny Podres of the Broklyn Dodgers, when he made an infield hit. Roberto hit his first home run against the New York Giants April 18, 1955. He hurt his back in an accident with a drunk driver and had to sit out many games of his rookie season.

The years 1960 and 1961 were good ones for the Pirates and Roberto. In 1960, Roberto was selected as a reserve on the All-Star team. The Pirates won the National League Pennant and played the New York Yankees. In game seven, in the bottom of the ninth with the score tied 9-9, Bill Mazeroski was at the plate versus Ralph Terry. He hit a deep drive to left field. Yogi Berra could only watch the ball sail over the fence for a home run. The Pirates had won the World Series! In 1961, Roberto started the All-Star game and played the whole game. He also led the MLB in hitting that year with a .351 Batting Average.

In 1968, Roberto had a bad year and thought about retiring. He hurt his right shoulder making a diving catch. That year Roberto hit only .291, his first year under .300 since 1959. In 1969, he injured his left shoulder. Also, Roberto was picked up by four men and who thought about killing him but when they found out that he was Roberto Clemente, they left him.

The year 1970 was near the end of Roberto's career and the end of Forbes Field. On June 28, 1970 the Pirates played the last game at Forbes Field. On July 24, 1970 they celebrated Roberto Clemente Night, his family and friends came and he made a speech. It was a joyous night for all of Puerto Rico. The Pirates won the National League East, but lost to the Cincinnati Reds in the National League Championship Series.

In 1971, the Pirates went to the World Series for the second time. The Pirates won the National League Pennant and went on to meet the Baltimore Orioles in the World Series. The Pirates lost the first two games and returned to Pittsburg for Game 3. Game 3 was the first night game in World Series history. The Pirates won three games and the Orioles won one, more so the stage was set for Game 7 in Baltimore. The Pirates won Game 7, 2-1, and the Pirates were the World Champions! Roberto was named MVP of the Series because he hit .414.

Roberto's last season in baseball was 1972. He got his 3,000th hit September 30, 1972 off Jon Matlock of the New York Mets. It was a double, and after he hit it they called time out and awarded the base to Roberto. It was one of the happiest days off his life. He was the 11th player to get 3,000 hits. The Pirates won the National League East but lost in the League Championship Series. Roberto died in a plane crash December 31, 1972, flying earthquake relief supplies to Nicaragua. His father and son Roberto Jr. both predicted the crash.

In 1973, Roberto was elected to the Hall of Fame in a special vote. His number, 21, was also retired. Roberto led the Pirates in career: games payed, hits, and total bases. He was third in runs scored, RBI's, doubles, triples, and home runs. Roberto won 4 Silver Bats, leading the league in hits, one MVP, one MVP of World Series, 12 Gold Gloves, given to best fielder in each league for each position, and he was an All-Star 14 times. His lifetime Batting Average was .317 and finished with 1,305 RBI's.

Roberto Clemente, was an immigrant from Puerto Rico, and he contributed to the field of baseball as a player. Clemente played for 18 years with the Pirates from 1955-1972. He was National League MVP in 1966 and World Series MVP 1971. Roberto died a sad and sudden death in 1972. I think Roberto Clemente was a good person and also a very good baseball player as is evident by his work with charities and his MVP trophies.

Key:

Lea.-League

Int.-International League

Nat.-National League

G-Games Played

AB-At Bats

R-Runs

H-Hits

2B-Doubles

3B-Triples

HR-Home Runs

RBI-Runs Batted In

SO-Strike Outs

BB-Base On Balls(Walks)

SB-Stolen Bases

BA-Batting Average

SA-Slugging Pecentage

(Walker 136)(Cooperstown 278)

Regular Season

Year	Lea.	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SO	BB	SB	BA	SA
1954	Int.	87	148	27	38	--	--	2	12	--	--	--	.257	----
1955	Nat.	124	474	48	121	23	11	5	47	60	18	2	.255	.382
1956	Nat.	147	543	66	169	30	7	7	60	58	13	6	.311	.431
1957	Nat.	111	451	42	114	17	7	4	30	45	23	0	.253	.348
1958	Nat.	140	519	69	150	24	10	6	50	41	31	8	.289	.408
1959	Nat.	105	423	60	128	17	7	4	50	51	15	2	.296	.396
1960	Nat.	144	570	89	179	22	6	16	94	72	39	4	.314	.458
1961	Nat.	146	572	100	201	30	10	23	89	59	35	4	.351	.559
1962	Nat.	144	538	95	168	28	9	10	74	73	35	6	.312	.454
1963	Nat.	152	600	77	192	23	8	17	76	64	31	12	.320	.470
1964	Nat.	155	622	95	211	40	7	12	87	87	51	5	.339	.484
1965	Nat.	152	589	91	194	21	14	10	65	78	43	8	.329	.463
1966	Nat.	154	638	105	202	31	11	29	119	109	46	7	.317	.536
1967	Nat.	147	585	103	209	26	10	23	110	103	41	9	.357	.554
1968	Nat.	132	502	74	146	18	12	18	57	77	51	2	.291	.482
1969	Nat.	138	507	87	175	20	12	19	91	73	56	4	.345	.544
1970	Nat.	108	412	65	145	22	10	14	60	66	38	3	.352	.556
1971	Nat.	132	522	82	178	29	8	13	86	65	26	1	.341	.502
1972	Nat.	102	378	68	118	19	7	10	60	49	29	0	.312	.479

Totals

There is more on the next page.

G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SO	BB	SB	BA	SA
2433	9454	1416	3000	440	166	240	1305	1230	621	83	.317	.475

League Championship Ship Series

Year	Lea.	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SO	BB	SB	BA	SA
1970	Nat.	3	14	1	3	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	.214	.214
1971	Nat.	4	18	2	6	0	0	0	4	6	1	0	.333	.333
1972	Nat.	5	17	1	4	1	0	1	2	5	3	0	.235	.471

Totals

G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SO	BB	SB	BA	SA
12	49	4	13	1	0	1	7	15	4	0	.265	.347

World Series

Year	Lea.	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SO	BB	SB	BA	SA
1960	Nat.	7	29	1	9	0	0	0	3	4	0	0	.310	.310
1971	Nat.	7	29	3	12	2	1	2	4	2	2	0	.414	.759

Totals

G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SO	BB	SB	BA	SA
14	58	4	21	2	1	2	7	6	2	0	.362	.534

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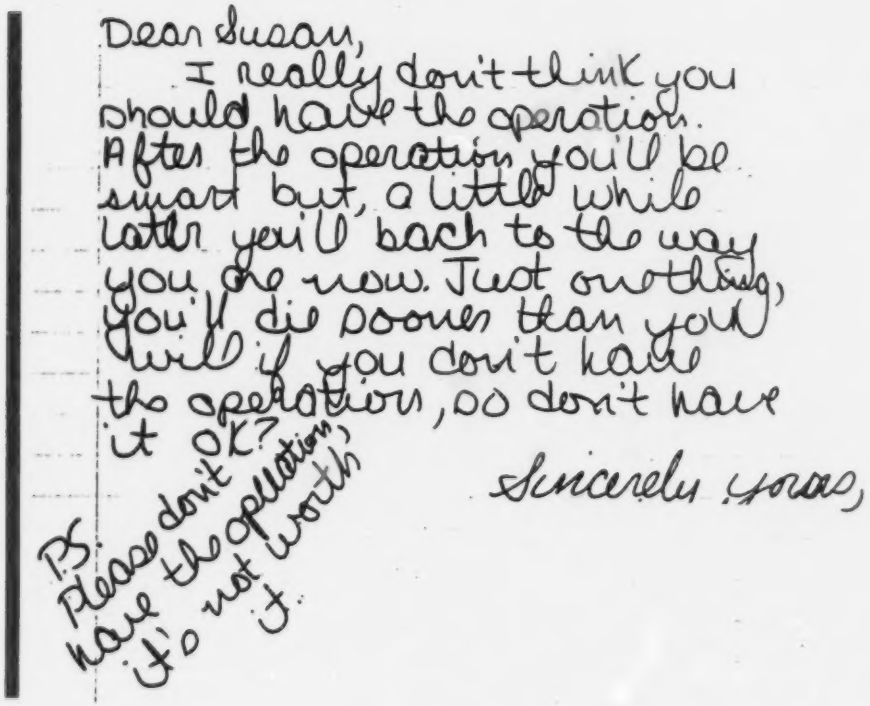
6: Elaborated Discussion. Virtually no papers were considered to be *Elaborated Discussions*. For papers to be placed in this category, they had to contain all the elements of the previous category, plus present a coherent sense of purpose and audience. These papers would contain an overt use of organizational structure and demonstrate excellent command of the conventions of written English.

3. Persuasive Writing

The following examples illustrate the range of persuasive writing submitted by the students who participated in this study. The students' papers are arranged according to the scores they received when they were evaluated. Each set of samples is preceded by an explanation of how these papers fit into the corresponding category.

1: Opinion. The two papers below are examples of *Opinions*. At this level, the writer asserts an opinion, but does not develop or explain this opinion in any detail. In *Opinion* papers reasons sometimes are given to support the opinion (as in the first example), but these reasons are unrelated to the opinion, contradict each other, or are confusing. In the second example, the writing itself is so unclear that the reasons for the opinion ("I think people should stop cutting down trees") are difficult to understand.

Example #1 (Eighth Grade)



Dear Susan,
I really don't think you should have the operation. After the operation you'll be smart but, a little while later you'll back to the way you are now. Just one thing, You'll die sooner than you will if you don't have the operation, so don't have it OK?
Sincerely Thomas,
P.S. Please don't have the operation, it's not worth it.

Example #2 (Fourth Grade)

Tell how the trees and plants of the rainforest are valuable to our earth

~~What~~ We get oxygen, fruit and other foods from ~~can~~ ~~from~~ trees in the ~~oxygen, fruit, and~~ Rain Forests. Plants provide medacine, and air. because of air, lives, animals, pets but the point is. That we will lose one fifth of are air will I think people should stop cutting down trees if they don't they will realys what they have did to people and the world. The problem is people need money to survive the people over there are cutting down trees for wood and land in rain cows. If we all pich in and don't litter we can save the rain forest. A plant in the rain forest is called the Madagascar periwinkle

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2: Extended Opinion. The two papers below are examples of *Extended Opinions*. These papers include a statement of opinion and reasons to support the opinion. However, the reasons are only briefly presented or the explanations are confusing.

Example #1 (Eighth Grade)

Chocolate vs. Vanilla

I think that chocolate ice cream is better than vanilla for a range of reasons. The first is I, personally, like chocolate ice cream. Another is I feel Chocolate has more flavor than vanilla ice cream.. Chocolate ice cream has more taste and is richer than vanilla. You can add just as much toppings to chocolate as you can to vanilla, maybe more.

There are a few reasons I feel that chocolate ice cream is better than vanilla ice cream. Everybody has their own opion and is entitled to say as it stood and that is mine.

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Example #2 (Eighth Grade)

I think burning the American Flag is the wrong thing to do because they are burning something that belongs to the country.

Some people burn flags at a ceremony, then bury the ashes. I think all of that is wrong. I think we should build a big huge building that we can store American Flags in after they are worn out or no longer useful. When the building gets full we should take all of the flags inside the building and bury all of them without burning them first. After burying them, we should do the same thing again and again.

Some people just burn a flag because it is warn out or they hate the country.

My grandfather is with the Knights of Columbus and they burn the flags then bury the ashes. I asked him if he thought my idea was a good idea and he does not like burning the flags, even though it is at a ceremony.

People that burn flags because they do not like our country, even though they live in this country, they should be thrown out of this country and sent to another one.

When I get older, I will try to build the building I was was talking about earlier. If my plan does not succeed, I will just try to get Americans to bury the American Flags without burning them.

Another way to expose the used American Flags is to bury them with a person who has served in the Armed Forces, and has died that way the flag will decentigrate with the Armed Forces member that it is buried with.

When I asked my mother if she thought it was right to burn the American Flag, she agreed with me and also said that someone should do something about it.

When I asked my father about the burning of the American Flags, he also said I was right to be against burning the American Flags.

The last person I asked was my grandmother. She says that the president should build a building to hold all of the used American Flags, even the new ones.

Protestors who burn the flags show no respect for their country. Even though they have the freedom to burn a flag, the flag represents the country that gives them that freedom.

A flag burning ceremony is sad any time I see a flag being burned, it reminds me of some kind of destruction. When I see a flag being burned, the stars being separated reminds me of the fifty states being separated.

When people see American Flags being burned, they see tiny parts of the flag float off into the air and know that all the ashes will not be buried together.

That is the end of my saying about the burning of the American Flag. I hope people agree that the burning of the American Flag is wrong.

3: Elaborated Opinion. The two papers below are examples of *Elaborated Opinions*. These papers include an opinion statement and clear reasons to support the opinion. They also contain attempts to develop the opinion with further explanation. However, the explanations given are not developed or elaborated. These papers may also contain an implicit reference to the opposing point of view.

Example #1 (Eighth Grade)

Stay In School

If you are thinking of dropping out of school, stop and think of this. Staying in school is one of the greatest things anyone can choose to do with his future. A person may think he can just drop out of school and get a job in a snap, but in all actuality, most jobs require a high school diploma.

Next, look at all of the good things about school, your future most importantly, teachers, trips, activites, friends, and memories.

Another thing to think about when contemplating dropping out of school, is this, if you think school is boring just imagine standing on a street corner seven hours a day!

Example #2 (Eighth Grade)

Parents Should Let Their Teens Date

Thesis: Parents should allow their teenagers to date when the teens say they are ready to date.

Parents should allow their teens to date despite the negative sides to it. 100% of teens polled ages 13-15 feel that the parents should allow them to date when they are ready. Dating when the teens are ready may keep them from rebelling against you and sneaking out anyway. If parents allow their teens to date it may help them learn to keep a curfew and take on responsibility. Parents should allow their teens to date and inform them of all the consequences that can happen such as date rape.

The conclusion.... Parents should allow their teens to date when they are ready.

4: Argument. The two papers below are examples of *Arguments*. In these papers, the writers state their opinions and give reasons to support their opinions. They also include at least one explanation that is well developed. Rhetorical devices (such as sequence of events, comparison/contrast, problem/solution, and classification) may be used to develop the explanation. These papers may also contain a brief summary of the opposite point of view.

Example #1 (Eighth Grade)

WE DON'T NEED A LONGER SCHOOL YEAR !!!

From my point of view, I feel there shouldn't be a longer school year because the government would have to come up with more money,because children are going to need a summer to relax,and teachers are not allowed enough time to teach.

First, the government would have to come up with more money.For instance, the government would have to come up with money for air conditioning because without cool air the children are going to feel uncomfortable, and they're not going to be able to concentrate on their studies.If they do not get air conditioning, they're going to have to buy fans.They're going to have to come up with money to pay their teachers for working more days because they won't work for free.They're gonna need more money to keep the school open and more money for keeping the lights on.

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Secondly, the children are going to need a summer to relax.Children are not gonna be able to concentrate on their studies while other children are outside playing or at camp.All children are not going to do well on their homework or on tests while they're thinking about swimming or playing outside.

Third, from an article that I found in JUNIOR SCHOLASTIC a teacher says."The problem is that teachers are not allowed enough time to teach."Carroll says, " Teachers need to be allowed to make better use of their time.Rather than monitor study halls or do administrative paper work,teachers should spend more time in class with kids."

As one can see from the reasons above,I do not feel that there should be a longer school year.!

Example #2 (Eighth Grade)

There is no doubt that it would make students happier to have more student council dances with better disc jockeys, contests, prizes, and original themes.

In the first place, having better disc jockeys would result in a larger crowd of students. Since the first disc jockey played inappropriate music, we got our old disc jockey back that most students greatly dislike. This results in having less people come to the dances.

Obviously, if we have better disc jockeys, it would result in more students coming to the student council dances. Furthermore, if more students show up to the dances, there can be more and better contests. In addition to that, each contest can result in prizes. For example, giving out a

belongs in #1

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tape would only cost the student council three dollars each.

Moreover, having original themes instead of having boring themes would draw in a bigger crowd. Also, you wouldn't have to drape streamers everywhere if you had a regular theme. Then you could decorate the dances according to the theme.

Charging more to get into the dance would be better also. The students probably wouldn't be bothered by paying more if the dance was better. This would include in having the students pay about five dollars, but get prizes and have better disc jockeys that play better songs.

those who talked about it the council #5.00 not attend

On the whole, I believe that it would make the students happier and benefit student council to have many more student council dances. The solution to this is to have better prizes, contests, and original themes. I also believe that students wouldn't mind paying more for this opportunity.

5: Developed Argument. The two papers below are examples of *Developed Arguments*. These papers support their opinions with clearly developed explanations. They also show an awareness of audience through the use of voice and/or the selection of appropriate supporting details.

Example #1 (Eighth Grade)

Dear Park Commissioner,

Hello! My name is [redacted], and I am here writing you the problem of young people, like my age, littering the parks. Some adults now want these kids out of these parks, because [redacted] matter. We all know that today's kids are very lazy in throwing out their litter. Not only the young people are lazy, but think some adults are the same. Now we must think how you can stop seeing these kids litter all over the area. I am going to give you some of these solutions I have suggested, that might help these kids, just to Pitch In!

One solution is to not to eat a drink in the area where's there's no garbage. This will eventually have no litter in the area. They will throw their litter in the garbage, if only, the garbage is not far away.

Another solution is to open a little snack restaurant, where these kids could eat slowly inside with no rush, and will throw their litter. People's businesses would be making alot of money, and there will be less litter in the outside area.

My other solutions, one of them, would be that they'll be fined if littering. If this happens again, then that person would be fined double. This will stop them, somehow.

Thank you for your time and patience reading this letter of mine, of today's kids littering the local parks.

Yours truly,

Example #2 (Eighth Grade)

Dear Principal:

I am a student council member who has just investigated the graffiti problem in our school. As I thoroughly inspected every bathroom in this entire building, I came up with a few interesting facts I'm sure you'd like to know about.

I ~~am~~ found that a gang of students have vandalized every bathroom in this school. Their motive

was "for kicks" and they knew they'd get away with it. It has occured everyday during school hours.

My first suggestion to terminate this problem is to offer an incentive to the students. You could hold an assembly gathering all three grades together and have a "competition". The grade that keeps their bathroom the cleanest will get to

have a dance at the end of the year. It will consist of a D.J. of their choice, and no money will have to be paid for the ticket, either.

New technology supports my last suggestion ~~(supports)~~ ... graffiti proof walls & a student might try to write on the walls, but nothing will show up. Although this may cost a lot of money, I think the

parents would like to see a clean school and a school in which the students "take pride."

(~~I~~ In) the conclusion, I would just like to add that I think any one of my solutions will work efficiently. I hope you take serious thought on the matter and take immediate action.

Sincerely,

6: Elaborated Argument. The paper below is an example of an *Elaborated Argument*. The few papers rated at this level present well-developed explanations in support of their opinions. Also, their presentation of details is clear and appropriate for the intended audience.

Example #1 (Eighth Grade)

Dear Principal:

I am a concerned student and am aware of the growing problem of graffiti in all bathroom facilities in our school. As an active member of our school's student council I feel it is my duty to help in any way possible to terminate this problem once and for all. In my letter to you, I will explain the situation and then provide details describing all of my solutions and recommendations.

My first solution is to establish a strong monitoring system to help insure that all vandalism will stop. Since the problem is being caused by delinquent students during

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school hours, the teachers or some type of hired staff will pay close attention to who enters and exits the bathroom, recording the times that they come and go. Every half hour will be check time when all graffiti is reported. This would discourage any student from such poor behavior because they would probably get caught. The school would have a record of who was in the bathroom and when they were there.

My next suggestion is to have the guilty get punished. Anyone who is caught and is responsible for the defacing of school property should be made to clean it. By making the delinquents who are caught clean the graffiti, this will discourage them to

do it again because they now know the consequences. Another good thing about this solution is that troublemakers who were thinking about defacing school property will see what has happened to the others, and through peer pressure they will also be discouraged.

We all agree that vandalizing school property is a serious offense. We must take action to eliminate this problem. It is the responsibility of everyone in the school including the faculty and students to work together as one.

Sincerely,

4. Poems

The following examples illustrate the poems that were submitted.

Example #1 (Fourth Grade)

Haiku

Birds are colorful
Wearing their jackets of blue
Perching on a branch.

Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry.
It does not rhyme.

The first line has five syllables.
The second line has seven syllables.
The third line has five syllables.

Write the following in correct haiku form. Begin each line with an upper-case letter.

The day is dying black clouds creep over the sun many lights are out.

10 of 14

The day is dying.
The sun many lights are out
Black clouds creep over.

Write a haiku of your own.

The day is funny.
The funny day is so dark
Now it is nighttime

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Example #2 (Eighth Grade)

Spring Breeze
Gently blowing soft
Pleasantly flowing longer
Kissing the child's cheeks.

Example #3 (Eighth Grade)

Home work

pyramids

clown
big clown
big clown in the circus
big clown in the circus plays
big clown in the circus plays jokingly
big clown in the circus plays jokingly during the sho

haiku Big fat Elephant
Eats lots of food allday long
While he sits around

cinquain

summer
Santa claus
seasons of the year
No school
winter

Diamante

water
wet, refreshing
swimming, drinking, bathing
They both are matter
playing, running, building
dry, hot
sand

Example #4 (Eighth Grade)

WHAT ARE THE LESSONS OF THE HOLOCAUST
FOR AMERICA?

The group who suffered,
better known as Jews,
were stripped of their clothing,
jewelry, and shoes.
Some were killed,
their bodies charred.
The others put to work,
then teased and scarred.

From all this
we should know
with a prejudice heart
you can not grow.
Yet still some people
think the same way,
that all people aren't equal,
and that's not true today.

They are the ones to blame
for doing horrible things,
like supporting the Holocaust
and causing the ordeal of Rodney King.

These oppressors need to realize
that what they think and do,
is wrong in the eyes of God,
and hurts people like me and you.

One thing we forget is our real best friend
who'll stay close beside us until the very end.
Jesus is his name and he loves us all.
When people realize this, we stand and never fall.

So keep your spirits up and never lose your faith
and try to help others no matter what their race.
Tell People who think prejudice is fine
to get that out of their heads and to try to clear their minds.

The Holocaust was terrible,
and it could happen again.
That's why we should all learn
racism is very wrong.
It pollutes our hearts and weakens the strong.

Jesus said he'd be back,
but he didn't say when or where.
When he returns if we want to go,
we must stand as one and say,
end discrimination!
Not tomorrow but today!

5. Letters

The following examples illustrate the letters that were submitted, but could not be classified as informative or persuasive.

Example #1 (Fourth Grade)

Dear Mom and Dad,

I would like to invite you to Back-to-School Night October 8, 1991 at 6:30-8:00 P.M. You will see a diorama, creat. flip book and a name poem.

The stationery I'm writing on I made.

Your daughter.

Example #2 (Eighth Grade)

Dear Susan,

Hi. How are you? Fine. I hope. I was wondering if you would like to go to Six Flags with us on July 24th The whole family is going.

If you decided to go we can ride the flashback, Texas Giant, the screamer and all those water rides. ~~The~~ also the Texas Tornado, the parachute dropper and the Texas Oiler. Oh yes and all that tasty food. Please come it'll be a blast.

If you want to go let me know, OK. Think about it real hard before you say no

Your true friend,

6. Skill Sheets

The following examples illustrate the kinds of skill sheets that students included in their portfolios.

Example #1 (Fourth Grade)

1 Grammar: Sentences (2) Use before pupil's pages 3–10.

A. Read the word groups below. If a word group is not a complete sentence, write *not a sentence* under it. If the word group is a sentence, write it correctly, using capital letters and end punctuation. Then write whether it is a *statement*, a *question*, a *request* or *command*, or an *exclamation*.

1. put this book away, please
   Put This book away please. command
2. how do you get to Edgewood Avenue
   How do you get to Edgewood Avenue. question
3. after lunch, but before dinner
   not a sentence
4. monkeys are my favorite animals
   Monkeys are My Favorite animals. statement
5. wow, what a fantastic game that was
   Wow what a Fantastic game the was. request — exclamation
6. the exit on the left
   not a Sentence

B. Draw one line under the subject of each sentence. Draw two lines under each predicate.

7. That film was really scary.
8. Big, green monsters invaded the planet Earth.
9. Earthlings were helpless against the creatures.
10. A scientist finally discovered the monsters' weak spot.

Name _____

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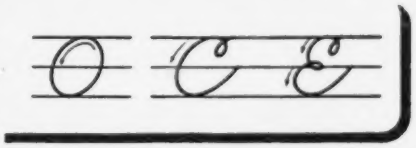
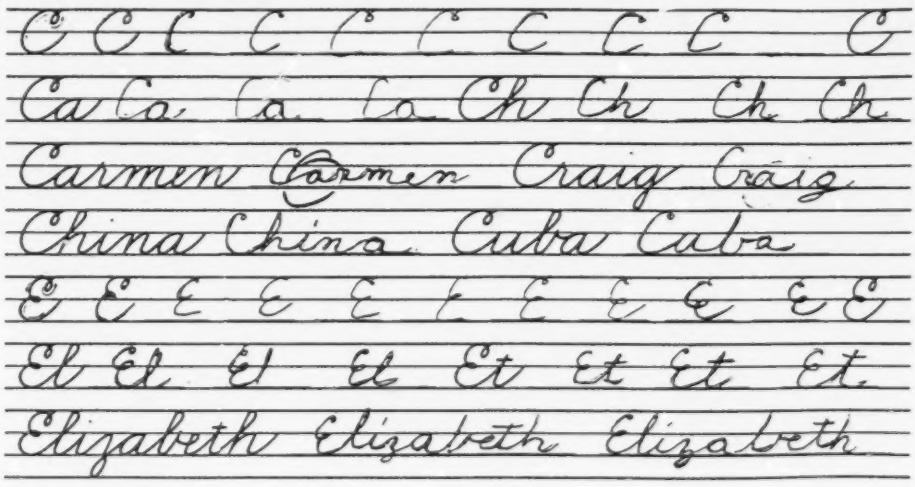
Example #2 (Eighth Grade)

Backward Oval Letters



The upper-case letters **C** and **E** are backward oval letters.

Trace and write the letters. Write the joinings and words.



Write the sentences.

Explore means to travel to unknown lands. Countries were formed when new lands were discovered.

Explore means to travel to unknown lands. Countries were formed when new lands were discovered.

Example #3 (Eighth Grade)

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